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John R. Totten -  
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# EUDOXIA:

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## **Endoxia; a Picture of the Fifth Century.**

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### **CHAPTER I.**

#### **IN THE ANTE-CHAMBER.**

It was the last year of the fourth century. In the imperial palace of Constantinople a strange silence reigned : every foot trod softly, every voice was subdued : it was as though all the inmates were oppressed by a sense of foreboding and expectation. In one of the ante-chambers, three men, lounging on luxurious cushions, had yielded to the influence of the prevailing atmosphere. One was asleep, the second was nodding, and the third was yawning. Suddenly the heavy silken curtain over the entrance-door was drawn aside, and a fourth person glided in.

“Amantius!” cried the yawning gentleman, so loud, that his companions were wide awake in a moment, while Amantius lifted his hand warningly. “Come, now, tell us all about it ; have you seen her?”

“Seen her?—I!” was the amazed answer, “you are dreaming, Hylas!”

“And how long is this cheerful state of things to continue, I wonder? Sacrifices are offered in silence to the gods: I think *our* sacrifice is unconscionably long.”

“Only, good Hylas, there are no infernal gods,” said Amantius quietly.

“True—only earthly goddesses—all I know is, but for you I should be apt to follow Arsenius.”

“Then certainly it is well for you that I *am* here. Tired out with three quiet days, and yet meditating on the life of a solitary, and perpetual silence,” said his friend, smiling, “no, my Hylas, *that* is not your vocation.”

“Ah—it just shows what ideas one may take up in a state of semi-petrification.”

“*You* may, certainly: Arsenius came to his resolution by rather a different process.”

“How was it, then? tell us for pity’s sake: anything to rouse one a bit; I feel myself shrivelling up perceptibly. Now begin—Arsenius was the tutor of the illustrious Arcadius,—

“But, before Amantius could commence his tale, there was a rustling and movement in the outer ante-chambers. The four chamberlains started to their feet, and a haughty-looking woman entered. There were the remains of great beauty in her face, but the look of pride was still more striking. Hylas and his companions stood on each side in respectful attitudes, and the lady, in her long trailing robes of the finest white wool, passed silently between them. But, when some other ladies were about to follow

her, Amantius stepped forward, for the chamberlains had to guard the inner apartments, and, if an exception were to be made in the first lady's favour, he saw no reason for admitting her suite. She, however, just glanced over her shoulder at Amantius, and saying, "I will take it upon myself," passed on, and the curtain fell behind her and her attendants.

When the echo of her footsteps had died away, Hylas said, "I would give anything if she was refused admission. How I should enjoy seeing her come back!"

"A mother can always visit her daughter," answered Amantius.

"But she is only foster-mother to our illustrious mistress."

"She has been a real mother in all care and tenderness."

"O, I dare say she laid her plans from the first, and foresaw all along that the most noble Eudoxia would fill the place she does."

"No, Hylas, no," said Amantius gravely, "such a thing would have seemed a sheer impossibility."

"She managed to make it possible, anyhow!"

"Wrong again: it was not her doing."

"Who did it then?"

"Eutropius."

Hylas stared at the speaker incredulously for a minute, and then he said in a still lower voice, "All Constantinople knows that between Eutropius and the Empress there is—no love lost."

"And yet the facts are as I say, and all Constantinople knows that too. Only it is not talked about, because the Consul is not popular."

“ Not popular ! that is a mild expression : Eutropius not popular, indeed !”

As Hylas raised his voice a little, the third chamberlain caught the words, and said, “ I beg your pardon, he is uncommonly popular with his friends.”

“ He has not got any,” growled Hylas, “ only creatures and accomplices.”

“ As you please : they swear by him all the same. Witness Leo the wool-carder, and Alexander the sausage-dealer, whom he has made commander of the cavalry and imperial treasurer.”

“ If I were Augustus, the whole lot of cattle should soon be sent packing,” said the indignant Hylas : “ I wonder he didn’t set the sausage-maker’s daughter on the throne, it would have been more in his line.”

“ Other motives, other influences were in the ascendant in those days,” returned Amantius “ and, besides, the deepest plotter is outwitted now and then.”

“ Heaven send we may see such an event in the case of Eutropius ! You are to be envied, Amantius, for remembering a time when he was not the principal person in the empire.”

“ The principal person !” said the third chamberlain, in a puzzled tone, “ why that can only be the illustrious Arcadius.”

“ Quite right, Theophanes. Hylas lets his tongue run rather fast, but he knows that as well as you or I. And you need not envy me, Hylas : every day brings its own cares.”

“ Still, the time of the great Theodosius must have been worth living in—a man who carried the world and

its cares, like Atlas, on his shoulders ! Come, I am determined on having a story of some sort : tell us something about him and the saintly empress *Ælia Flaccilla*, your first mistress. That's the way you got all your goodness : example's everything!"

"If I had followed hers, I should have considerably more goodness, Hylas :" and Amantius went on to speak tenderly and reverently of Flaccilla, her many virtues, and her early death. It was by her wish that he had remained in the service of her young son Arcadius, who was only eight years old at his mother's death, though he had worn the purple as Augustus for two years. Arcadius had always honored his mother's faithful friend, and by his command Amantius was attached to the household of the Empress Eudoxia.

"Go on, Amantius," said Hylas presently, "we have come to none of the cares you spoke of yet."

"Do you believe in none but personal sorrows, you selfish Hylas ?" said Amantius playfully, and he went on to tell of the second marriage, with Galla, sister of Valentinian, the Emperor of the West, of the murder of her two gallant nephews Gratian and Valentinian the younger, and then of the death of the great Emperor himself in the prime of life.

"So it all ends," said Hylas,—"death at last for all, emperors and beggars ! with this difference, that beggars do not get murdered."

"Which is the best off, then," asked Theophanes, "the beggar who lives to old age, and dies as poor as he has lived, or a Cæsar Augustus, who is cut off in all his glory by the hand of an assassin ?"

"I do not admire extremes, answered Hylas, "I am for something between the two."

"Hark!" whispered Theophanes, "she is coming back: it has been a short visit."

"The lady looked displeased and out of sorts: and the folds of her mantle or shawl, as we should call it, were less carefully arranged than usual. She passed through the suite of ante-chambers into an arcade which surrounded the inner court, where her litter-bearers, six gigantic Cappadocians, all clothed in dark blue, and all of the same height, were lounging beside a sparkling fountain which fell into a deep basin of prophry. On the appearance of their mistress, they hastened to bring forward a costly litter of cedar inlaid with ivory, and when she had placed herself on the silk cushions, the slaves bore their burden with swift elastic tread through the network of streets leading from the palace to the harbour, till the whole train vanished from sight in a stately dwelling overlooking the Bosphorus.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE LORD OF THE EAST.

The century which was just closing began with Constantine, and drew to an end with Theodosius. Now, in its last year, Arcadius, a youth of two and twenty, ruled from the Adriatic to the Euphrates, from the Danube to the cataracts of the Nile. I say, he ruled these fair lands : but an unworthy favourite ruled him. Everything was bought and sold, justice, place, honours : every one cringed to the favourite : and avarice, luxury, and self-indulgence were the idols to which sacrifices were offered, as many and costly as when the old heathen temples were thronged with votaries. And yet Arcadius was not a bad, not even a frivolous young man. He was gentle and pious, and pure in life, but of a character so inconceivably weak, that he seemed incapable of independent action, and was all his life ruled by others, less from want of understanding than from weakness of will. It must be hard, certainly, to turn out good for much when one has been an emperor from one's childhood, and consequently treated with the slavish idolatry with which Orientals honour their masters ; it must be difficult to strengthen a character which has never known opposition, and a heart which has never been visited by those heavenly messengers—trial and sorrow. He lost

his mother too early to mourn for her ; still, young as he was, she had laid the foundation of firm Christian principles, and he preserved them with fidelity at least, though their fruits were scanty. His father was rarely with him, and his tutor, Arsenius, a man of high and noble character, disgusted with the courtly atmosphere in which his influence was powerless, left the palace for the desert of the Thebaid. Just now, Arcadius was in anything but a comfortable state of mind, for the breach between his consort and his favourite widened daily, and he could not propitiate the one without irritating the other. He loved his beautiful Eudoxia passionately, and believed in Eutropius as the most faithful of his servants : and now she fretted herself ill over the insults which she endured from this all powerful favourite, and revenged herself on the Emperor. For three days she had been invisible, even to him : the palace was in confusion, the Emperor in despair.

It was sunset on a fair summer's day. Arcadius walked restlessly up and down a hall open to the west and looking out on a scene of matchless beauty. The Hebdomon Palace, which he occupied, lay at one end of Constantinople, landwards, and on an eminence : at the other end was the Palace of Constantine, on the spot where the Bosphorus falls into the Propontis, and between the two lay the imperial city in the arms of the sea. Beyond the Bosphorus spread the blooming Bithynian coast, with Chalcedon in the foreground, and in the background Olympus with its diadem of eternal snow. But Arcadius saw nothing of all this lavish loveliness : the setting sun shone in vain for him, though it lit up the

glittering pinnacle of the Bithynian Olympus, till it gleamed like a ruby between heaven and earth ; and though the little islands which dotted the Propontis showed like jewels in a silver basin, they won no glance from the moody Emperor. And that fair land of Bithynia called up thoughts of Tribigild, the Goth, who had raised a revolt in Asia Minor, and, of Leo, the incapable general who had been sent against him. Nothing but strife and tumult in the palace and the empire—with friend and foe : he might well be moody and perplexed, poor Arcadius ! A different man would have made an effort to get out of all these difficulties—would have done something—taken some step, even if it were a wrong one. But Arcadius did nothing : he just let himself go helplessly with the stream. His appearance was lacking in dignity, like his character : we all know the charm which a high and noble spirit can give to the homeliest features, but no such light redeemed the plainness of the Emperor's. He wore a tunic of cream-coloured silk embroidered in gold, and the short purple boots which were the especial insignia of imperial dignity, and which, by the way, a thousand years later, revealed the fate of the last Roman Emperor of the East. At the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, Constantine Palæologus fell, and a heap of bodies covered his : later, when he was sought for on all sides, the purple boots told the tale. Presently a fine stately looking man appeared on the terrace, and Arcadius beckoned him to approach. It was Elpidius, a relation of Theodosius, and like him, a Spaniard. “ Well, Elpidius, how do matters stand ? ”

“ Reports differ, most Illustrious : the Phrygians are

said to be in arms. Whether for or against the Goths is not certain."

"O those eternal Goths!" said the Emperor impatiently. "I am weary of their name—I meant *your* affairs, Elpidius."

"Mine!" and the large brilliant eyes flashed with light;—"look yonder, my Emperor! Olympus there bears her name, her beauty, and her icy coldness."

"There is *one* difference, Elpidius: Olympus is bright with rosy light, and her life is clouded by sorrow."

"She can alter it all with a word, but she will not: such obstinacy is insupportable in a woman, and, which is worse still, it is audacious insolence to you, my lord and master."

"Not so—Olympias has a noble heart, and is incapable of insolence. Elpidius, I pity her: do you think this is the way to gain her consent?"

"I think, most Illustrious, that Eutropius expressed your sentiments in saying that Olympias gives a dangerous example by lavishing her fortune on churches, monasteries, and hospitals. Will not numbers follow it, and withdraw their property from the use of the state to spend it in excessive alms-giving? It is in the nature of women to run to extremes, and it is for their good to check them, and save them from the regrets which would come in time, if they were not restrained. *Were* not these your own sentiments, most noble Arcadius?"

"Anyhow," said Arcadius evasively, "it seems hard that such a woman as Olympias should not have perfect liberty as to her property, and her person. She has

always been a virtuous and high-minded lady ; and it is treating her like a child or a fool."

" Pardon, most Illustrious, if I repeat that she is guilty of disrespect to you in rejecting me, her equal in birth and riches, and favoured too by your gracious recommendation of my suit. Thousands would feel honoured by it, and she rejects it."

" But with what humility ! "

" In words, I grant it ; but words and deeds are often in startling contrast."

" Not with Olympias : have you forgotten how she acted when deprived of the disposal of her fortune till her thirtieth year, and placed till then under the guardianship of the Prefect of the city ? She wrote to thank me for my considerateness, saying it might save her from the vanity and self-seeking into which it is easy to fall when giving large alms. I tell you, Elpidius, I think her an admirable creature, and I want to know if you have any hope of gaining her consent : if not, would it not be more reasonable and more generous to cease from this persecution of a defenceless woman ? "

" As you will, most Illustrious," answered Elpidius with assumed calmness, " but if I withdraw my suit, it must be on condition that you will graciously announce your determination to Eutropius, in order that Olympias may be really free."

" I look at the matter from a different point, my friend," Arcadius answered rather nervously : " the first step should be taken by you, and I beg you to signify to Eutropius that you are weary of your thankless suit, and desire that Olympias should be altogether free."

“Pardon, once more, my lord ; but even if in obedience to your wish I consented to speak falsely, it would, as you well know, have no weight with Eutropius, who will obey none but you ; spare me, therefore, the useless mortification, and settle the matter yourself with him.”

The Emperor groaned inwardly at the thought of his utter helplessness with regard to the favourite, and turned the conversation awkwardly enough, back to the subject “of the eternal Goths” and his incompetent general, Leo, and then dismissed Elpidius as soon as he decently could. The composure of the latter was only external : inwardly he was burning with indignation against Eutropius, whom he suspected of having, for ends of his own, changed the Emperor’s sentiments towards Olympias. “He wants to get rid of me, the shameless villain ! and then to bring some accusation against her which will put her fortune in his power,” he thought. Elpidius was wrong : it was not Eutropius, but Eudoxia, to whom the Emperor’s state of mind was due, not, however, intentionally on her part. He was forcibly struck by the contrast between her way of resenting a slight, and the quiet submission with which Olympias bore an unheard of injustice, and he was possessed by the idea that the best way to gain the help of Heaven in a reconciliation with Eudoxia would be to do justice to Olympias. But how was he to manage with Eutropius, now that he could get no help from this proud Spaniard ?

## CHAPTER III.

## A RETROSPECT.

The great Theodosius had no more valiant or trustworthy general than Bauto, the Frank, and at the Emperor's desire he brought his wife and child from Treves to Constantinople, and spent with them the short snatches of repose which those warlike times afforded. He was a man of cultivated mind, as well as a brave soldier, and was very fond of his gifted and beautiful child; but neither he nor his wife lived to see their bud unfold. His wife died soon after coming to the East,—she pined away in home-sickness for the hazel-bordered banks of the Moselle. Bauto commended his orphan daughter to the care of his brother-in-arms, the consul Promotus, for there were consuls still, though mere shadows of the old republican consuls, and their dignity was much desired though little reverenced. It was no safeguard, however, to Promotus, for he had for his enemy a man so high in the Emperor's favour that, though a barbarian of low birth, he had attained the highest dignities of the empire and was appointed regent of the West, when Theodosius had to be in the East, and while Arcadius was still a child. This man was Rufinus, now prime minister in Constantinople. In the Emperor's presence, only his

valuable qualities came out, and Theodosius prized his acuteness, courage and boundless loyalty. But the people hated him for his avarice, and the nobles for his arrogance. Once, in a dispute with Rufinus, Promotus was so far carried away by anger and contempt as to strike the *parvenu* Gaul in the face. That blow was the ruin of Promotus: he was sent to Thrace to put down an insurrection, and Rufinus took care that he should never return: he was attacked by an ambuscade, and slain.

His widow Marsa continued her motherly care of Bauto's orphan, and took the greatest pains with her education. She was thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of the Christian religion also, and under different influences would have been a noble character. But instruction is only one part of education—the other, and most important, is example. Marsa had no higher aim than wordly success and *eclat*. She spent the greater part of the day in her dressing-room, surrounded by a crowd of attendants. Ladies of rank and fashion never appeared in public at this period except in a robe and mantle of pure white, with a purple gold-embroidered hem: only women of inferior rank and doubtful repute wore coloured dresses out of doors. But the ladies consoled themselves by wearing all the colours of the rainbow in their own houses, or in the country. Marsa changed her mind a hundred times before her toilette for the day was chosen. Then another engrossing employment was the purchase of ornaments for her person and her apartments. Next came visits to or from other ladies, or to the circus, or perhaps to a church if there was to be a sermon by some famous preacher, so that she was fully occupied all day,

and went to rest at night perfectly satisfied with herself. This was how Marsa and her special friends Eugraphia and Castricia passed their lives, and this was the atmosphere in which the orphan Eudoxia grew up to youth and beauty.

The great Theodosius died, and the child Honorius was Emperor of the West, and Arcadius, a boy of sixteen, of the East. His father had made Rufinus his principal adviser—in reality he was absolute ruler. His avarice and ambition were boundless, and now without restraint. This weak boy was not Theodosius! Rufinus aimed at nothing less than the imperial crown, and as a preparatory step, planned his daughter's marriage with the young Emperor. But, though he was the master, he was not the favourite of Arcadius. That place was occupied by an Armenian freedman, who began his career as a groom in the Imperial stables, and gradually got to be a sort of underling among the palace servants. He was gifted with a serpentine faculty for twisting and turning, and creeping through narrow and crooked ways, which stood him in good stead now, so that at last his attention to his duties, his eagerness to obey a word or look, drew the notice of the good-natured and unsuspecting Arcadius. Eutropius petitioned to be advanced from the wardrobe-room, which had hitherto been his post, and placed amongst the Emperor's personal attendants. The petition was granted, and the game won. Rufinus, in his haughty arrogance, never noticed the little viper lurking in the shadow of the throne, and strode on in his path of tyranny and oppression, followed by the curses of rich and poor. The time seemed now

ripe for carrying out his project for his daughter's advancement, but Arcadius had as little admiration for her as liking for her father, and of late Eutropius had been incessantly sounding the praises of another young lady, whose beauty and intellect he described as matchless. By cunning and bribery of every kind, he managed to procure Eudoxia's portrait, which had all the effect on Arcadius which his favourite hoped: he fell desperately in love with the beautiful orphan's picture.

When Rufinus returned from a distant expedition, he found the court and the whole city in a state of excitement and preparation for the Emperor's marriage, the day for which was fixed. Strange to say, the bride's name was unknown. Arcadius said not a word: so far did the influence of Eutropius extend, who had resolved to feast his eyes on the utter ruin of the powerful minister. No suspicion was in the mind of Rufinus; he was a severe husband and father, utterly regardless of the treasures he possessed in wife, daughter, and sister, who were among the noblest of women, and who sought by a life of tears, prayers, and works of mercy, to make daily reparation for his life of injustice and oppression. He ordered his wife to dress her daughter in a manner suited to the imperial bride, whom the messengers of the Emperor would come to receive. Sylvina, her mother, and her aunt Sylvia had no desire for such a dizzy elevation, but they obeyed without question or complaint. Besides, to reject the wooing of a Cæsar Augustus was simply impossible. The day came, as lovely a one as ever smiled over the Propontis; a crowd was assembled round the palace of Rufinus, and the interior was

thronged with courtiers anxious to be amongst the first to greet the Emperor's father-in-law. The procession began to move from the Imperial palace, led by Eutropius, the lord-chamberlain. Several pages carried the bridal presents uncovered, so that all could see and admire,—strings of pearls, milk-white and rose-coloured, emeralds, diamonds, jewels of every kind and hue, piled up in costly profusion in golden baskets, stuffs of many dyes and richest texture, phials of transparent Egyptian alabaster filled with perfumes of fabulous cost: these and many a priceless gift besides, were borne onward as the train wound through the streets, to stop—so all expected—at the palace of Rufinus. But, at a signal from its leader, it halted before Marsa's dwelling: the doors of the court were flung open, and the brilliant procession vanished from the sight of the gaping and bewildered crowd.

Rufinus listened with swelling heart to the surging sound of thousands of feet drawing nearer and nearer: suddenly all was still,—what did it mean?—some little accident, perhaps,—some obstacle in the way. But, no! there was no sound of advancing feet—all continued silent, and the moments went slowly by. Then, like a thunderclap, burst upon his ear the shout with which the crowd greeted Eutropius as he came, without the bridal presents, forth from Marsa's palace. Eudoxia herself was overwhelmed with astonishment, Marsa with delight. “It is like a dream,” said the young girl, as she stood looking with bewildered eyes on the treasures heaped around her.

“Are you not glad, lady?” asked one of her attendants, “I should be out of my senses with delight.”

“ We are different, my poor Aglae,” said her mistress, quietly. “ All these things are very beautiful: but I shall not enjoy them till I am Empress.”

“ Yes, when the East is at your feet!” cried Marsa, triumphantly. “ But come, girls, and let us adorn our Empress: in a couple of hours the ceremony takes place at Sta. Sophia.”

When they were alone she embraced her adopted daughter tenderly, saying, “ How little did Promotus think, my Eudoxia, when first he took you to his home, that you would one day revenge him on his deadliest enemy.”

“ Yes, *that* is something worth being glad about. But it is not *my* doing; it is the hand of God, and I shall never forget that your loving care has been the means of placing me on the throne of the East.”

Eudoxia became the bride of Arcadius. The first few weeks went by in the whirl of excitement which was natural to her sixteen years: then came some drops of wormwood in her cup of nectar. Arcadius loved her passionately and entirely: why, then, was she only his consort, and not Augusta? It rested with the Emperor to declare his son Augustus, or his wife Augusta, and Arcadius had not so honoured her! her title was only, “ most noble:” she felt this more bitterly on hearing that after their father’s death the imperial brothers had declared their little half-sister, Galla Placidia, Augusta. What did it mean? whose influence withheld the title? she had not yet learned what fetters held the weak indolent Arcadius prisoner.

“ Patience, most Illustrious,” said Eutropius; “ when

the most noble Eudoxia has given you a son, then she will have earned the title of Augusta."

"What has that to do with the question?" asked Arcadius discontentedly.

"Much, my lord and Emperor; for, if unhappily, the most noble Eudoxia has no son, it would be easier for her to retire into her former position, before bearing the higher title."

"Are you mad enough to suppose that any reason could part me from her?"

"Even a Cæsar Augustus has a duty to his people," answered the favourite pathetically. And the great word, "duty," which was an empty sound to him, was powerful with the pious Emperor, and he remained silent.

It must not be supposed that Rufinus had forgotten the past: he thirsted for revenge—revenge on a grand scale—revenge on the Emperor himself. He entered into a secret conspiracy with the Goths, who, under generals of their own, formed divisions of the imperial army, and were far more devoted to those generals than to the Emperor. In this way Rufinus hoped to gain the purple. But the spies of Eutropius were on the watch, and the treason Rufinus meditated was his own ruin. The Gothic leader, Gainas, found it more to his interest to act for the Emperor in concert with Eutropius, than with the disappointed plotter. Gainas was returning from the West, after conquering Arbogastes, and, according to custom, the Emperor met the troops at the Golden Gate of the Hebdomon Palace: his court surrounded him, Rufinus was at his side, bolder and statelier than

ever : there, at the feet of the horror-struck Arcadius, Gainas gave him his death-blow.

The murder was unpunished : Eutropius and Gainas had clear proofs of the treason of Rufinus, and the people hailed them as deliverers from the tyrant they hated. Their joy, however, was over, when they learned more of the character of his successor. Rufinus was at least a man of ability and courage, who filled his office with dignity, and could speak and act in a manner worthy of it. But Eutropius !—he was not only hated but despised, and by no one more than by the young empress. It was plain to the favourite that the day which should see her admitted, as Augusta, to a share of sovereignty would be the last of his power, and so his own aim was, at all events, to delay its coming.

Eudoxia spent unheard of sums in dress and jewellery : but they were never too great to be supplied by the favourite : she might hate him, but he would make himself useful, indispensable to her. Yet she wept tears of rage over her diamonds : one day Marsa found her weeping, with a splendid coronet lying before her. “Tears!” she said, “with such jewels before you!” and she was about to place them on Eudoxia’s rich blonde hair. But she turned away with the passionate exclamation, “It is not the diadem of the Empress ! it is worthless in my eyes !”

Then came bitter disappointment : twice she became a mother, but not of a son. In a melancholy and thankless spirit she received her second daughter, little thinking that on her alone, of all his descendants, would rest the spirit of the great Theodosius : that child was Pulcheria, the Saint in the Purple.

## CHAPTER IV.

## A PETITION.

In a very simple apartment of the Palace of the Patriarch of Constantinople two persons were conversing together. One was young, the age of the other was not easy to guess: the frail bent figure, the delicate features, the deep-sunk eyes, left one in doubt whether he were aged by years or sickness. Until he spoke he merely gave the impression of a weakly and somewhat insignificant person, but *when* he spoke, the eyes lit up, and a marvellous life and force were in his voice and his whole bearing. “Go, Serapion,” he was saying to the young man, who stood in a respectful attitude before him, “go and give him my message: say that I beg, implore, abjure him to rescind this cruel law. He will thank me for my message on his death-bed, if not before: tell him so.”

“I will do your bidding, holy father, but do not blame your messenger if his mission is unsuccessful,” answered Serapion.

“Nay, my son, the result is in God’s hands: we can only do our part to avert so inhuman a decree.”

It was the Patriarch John, better known by the name conferred on him, Chrysostom, or Golden-mouth, who was sending his deacon, Serapion, to the Consul Eutro-

pius. For it had come to this, that a slave, never remarkable except for his vices, was numbered among the successors of the Fabii and the Scipios. He was not recognized, however, in Rome: the senate refused to do so, and the annals of the city bore, that year, the name of but one consul, Mallius Theodorus. Eutropius was easily consoled for the slight: it was enough for him that he was consul in Constantinople, where his statue was already placed in the Forum. Strange enough, it was this man whose influence had called the pious priest and renowned preacher from his birthplace, Antioch, to the patriarchal throne. All Constantinople rang with the fame of his holy life and his rare mental gifts: the people clamoured for him, the virtuous portion of the clergy desired him: all agreed that such a man would be an honour and an ornament to his office, and Eutropius, glad to gain credit so easily, had no difficulty in persuading the Emperor to accede to the universal wish. He reckoned on the patriarch's blind submission, which mean souls call gratitude: Chrysostom thanked him after the manner of lofty souls, by telling him the truth. Eutropius was hated, feared—and slavishly obeyed—by the whole court and city. Eudoxia feared, hated, and defied him. The patriarch did neither, but tried to withhold him from evil measures, whenever he had the opportunity, —as on the present occasion.

The young deacon had long to wait before obtaining an audience of Eutropius; at the end of three hours he was admitted, and the Consul, who had just made an excellent bargain with one of his suppliants, came forward in high good-humour, saying, “a messenger from our

holy patriarch is always welcome, and should have taken precedence of all others, had it been possible. What does the holy father desire ? ”

“ He begs you earnestly, my lord, to revoke the law which deprives the churches of the right of sanctuary.”

“ Impossible,” answered Eutropius coldly, “ the Emperor has spoken.”

“ A word from you would make it possible,” pleaded the deacon.

“ It is a necessary measure ; there must be an end of this protection of offenders.”

“ Yes, mighty lord ! if, at the same time, protection can be found for the innocent, for widows and orphans. But in troubled times like these, times of strife and of persecution, the right of sanctuary is a priceless privilege for the persecutor as well as for the persecuted, by giving him time for reflection and repentance.”

“ All this outcry has been raised at Pentadia’s instigation,” said Eutropius rudely.

“ Pentadia ! the noble widow of Primasius ? ” asked the astonished Serapion.

“ Yes—Primasius was a traitor.”—

“ That he was not ! Balbus, whom he trusted, was a false accuser.”

“ Wrong, my good Serapion ! the truth is what I say : Primasius deserved to die ; his banishment to the African deserts was an act of grace—he died there, certainly,—people are mortal in Africa as well as in Asia. Then Pentadia took refuge in a church—refuge indeed ! and she was so far from being persecuted that the most clement Arcadius allowed her to enjoy her husband’s en-

tire fortune ! The whole affair was an absurdity—the explanation of all this fuss lies in her hatred of me : she has spread the report that *I* am at the bottom of the law—that *I* cannot forget her escape, and her enjoyment of the fortune—that *I* have raised a barrier against the recurrence of such an event. I see it all—a woman's revenge !”

“ I cannot deny, illustrious Eutropius, that such things are reported: nay, my most reverend father expressly commanded me to inform you of them, to show you how universal the dislike to the law is. But, believe me, they are not spread by the noble Pentadia: she lives only for her work, heedless of everything outside the walls of her cell, the church, and the hovels of the poor.”

“ And does the patriarch suppose that I shall be induced to revoke the law by these rumours ?” sneered Eutropius.

“ No, my lord, but by Christian charity,” was the calm reply: “ do not close the last refuge for the persecuted.”

“ A refuge only sought by criminals !”

“ Is it a crime to have powerful enemies ?”

“ My good friend, you talk as if the world were peopled by innocent victims.”

“ Not so, great Eutropius, but, however few they may be, they have a claim to protection: and even a guilty person must not be ruthlessly assassinated.”

“ All this is idle talk. The law is made, to rescind it would be a mockery. I beg you to say this to the most venerable patriarch, with my respectful regrets that I cannot oblige him.”

“One word, my lord!—he bade me kneel at your feet to beg this grace, . . . . he charged me to adjure you to be merciful, that so you may find mercy at the Last Day!”

“I trust that I am too good a Christian not to appear before my Judge with confidence,” said Eutropius with unction: then he clapped his hands, and enquired of the servant who answered the summons, who next demanded audience.

“A messenger from the army, Illustrious.”

“And he has been waiting while I have been wasting time in listening to old women’s gossip? Show him in directly!”

Serapion heard the loud angry words as he retired, and, noticing the alarmed expression of the messenger, said good-naturedly: “Never fear—that was for my benefit, not yours.”

“Possibly—but my business will not have a tranquilizing effect,” was the whispered reply, as the man entered the presence Serapion had just quitted.

## CHAPTER V.

## EUDOXIA AND AMANTIUS.

Eudoxia was alone in her private apartment, seated on a low couch, her head resting on her hand, and her eyes fixed on the ground. She was buried in thought: only a slight movement of one slender foot showed some impatience or irritation. She was wonderfully lovely: everything about her was almost dazzling in brightness—the brilliant blue eyes, the wealth of shining golden hair, the radiant smile, the soft youthful bloom. The poets of the day called her a living sunbeam. And to give additional charm to all her beauty, she possessed the utmost grace of form and movement, an ever-changing expression, a commanding dignity, and a winning sweetness. Almost as if she had been thinking over her many attractions, she suddenly started from her musing attitude murmuring, “And I am not Empress!” She moved restlessly through the splendid room, the marble walls and floor of which were covered with silken hangings and Persian carpets; the couches, which we should now call *chaises longues*, and the chairs, were of ivory; the tables of marble or rare wood, supported on pillars of bronze. Faint blue clouds rose from the pierced covers of silver incense burners disposed here and there about the

room. On one table lay Eudoxia's writing materials, different sized waxen tablets, which did duty for paper ; golden styles, in place of pens. All this luxury gave no pleasure to Eudoxia. She did not even notice it : she was busy with her own thoughts, and the only sound in the perfect stillness around her was the rustle of her light-blue silk dress, as its gold-embroidered border swept over the carpet.

Presently one of her ladies, who regularly succeeded each other on guard in the ante-chamber, lifted the curtain before the door, saying, "Amantius is returned."

"At last !" cried Eudoxia ; and as he entered and bent one knee before her, she said eagerly, " Well ?"

" Most noble Eudoxia, your proposal is declined, with humble thanks for your condescending sympathy."

" Amantius !" Her voice trembled with indignation, and her eye flashed threateningly.

" Most noble Lady, it is as I said."

" But why ? It is incomprehensible !—Really, positively declined, Amantius ?"

" Most respectfully and most positively."

" Then you must have managed the affair ill and awkwardly ! And I counted so upon you—trusted you so thoroughly ! Imagine your being unable to carry through a simple thing like that ! On whom can I rely, if not on you and your fidelity ?"

" Always on my fidelity, noble lady ; but I must crave your gracious indulgence when I am unable to succeed, as now."

" But why—why are you unable, when it is my will, and you profess to be my devoted servant ?" asked

Eudoxia passionately. Then she added quickly, “ Well, tell me all about it so that I may understand.

“ I had long to wait,” began Amantius, “ before I was admitted to the presence of the noble Olympias.”

Eudoxia interrupted him haughtily : “ Why had you to wait ? was she not told that you were my messenger ?”

“ Perhaps you do not know, most noble lady, that Olympias has a small hospital for the sick poor in her house. One of them lay in the agony of death, and she could not leave him.”

“ Ah ! that was right,” said Eudoxia.

“ So,” Amantius continued, “ I had plenty of time to observe the plainness—nay, the poverty, of the house which was, in the life time of Anicius, the most brilliant in Constantinople. The income of the noble Olympias only allows now of the scantiest attendance, and, in order to have more to give in alms, she contents herself with the barest necessities. The court, the portico, the ante-chambers, were all empty, and I had passed through many apartments before I heard the hum of a spinning wheel, the first sign of human habitation. A young girl was making a garment of the same coarse wool which an older woman was engaged in spinning. I could not conceal my astonishment at finding such work going on in the ante-chamber of a lady of rank ; and, as soon as the elder woman had sent her companion to announce my arrival to her mistress, she turned to me as if it was a relief to her to pour out her heart. ‘ Yes, you see how we have fallen, how far tyranny has been carried ! You see how the daughter and heiress of Anicius is compelled to live ! Was ever such treatment of a noble lady, and

a widow too, heard of? Persecution and chicanery without end! First her fortune is taken out of her hands, then her income reduced to the half, then still lower, so that, as you may see, even the furniture of the house has been sold, because my noble mistress would do anything rather than give up her little hospital: and now actually her personal liberty is restrained, so that she cannot go out to church: is not all that beyond endurance?"

"Yes, that it is," exclaimed Eudoxia; "but the man who is audacious enough to insult the wife of the Emperor will not spare other women."

"I asked," continued Amantius, "how she bore this persecution. 'O,' said the good woman, 'she is the daughter of very great and mighty princes, according to the flesh; but, after the spirit, she is the child of God—a bearer of the Cross. She says that all these trials are sent by God, and so must be for her good. And in addition to the persecutions of the Consul, she has to bear the reproaches of all her relations. They are incessantly pressing a second marriage on her, calling her foolish, eccentric, self-willed, for preferring to be an ill-used, plundered captive, rather than the honoured wife of Elpidius.'"

"Strange!" interrupted Eudoxia: "I could not have believed that either cruelty or resignation could have gone so far. And it makes her rejection of my proposal still more incomprehensible. Well, Amantius, you saw her at last?"

"The maiden Theone brought back word that I must either wait till her mistress could leave the hospital, or return another day. I chose to wait, and the faithful at-

tendant of Olympias told me much of her mistress, with whom she had lived from her childhood. Everything shows that, from the first, her heart was given to heavenly things, though her father lived and died a pagan, and her mother was only baptized on her death-bed."

"Is it not true," asked Eudoxia, "that Olympias was brought up by Sylvia, the sister of that horrible Rufinus?"

"No, most noble Eudoxia: Anicius seems, in spite of his paganism, to have been an upright, superior man, and to have dealt quite fairly by his daughter. He was on intimate terms with several bishops and priests, and begged one of them to recommend him a Christian lady to supply her mother's place to the little orphan. The bishop sent him his own sister, Theodosia, and while gaiety of all sorts went on in the palace, she and her young charge occupied the quiet rooms at the back, and there Olympias learnt to pity and to help the poor, the sick, and the wretched. Sylvia was a friend of Theodosia's, so that Olympias had her example before her eyes. You remember, lady, how brave she was in concealing and ministering to the persecuted Christians in the time of the Arian Emperor Valens."

"Imagine a Rufinus and a Sylvia being branches of the same stem!" cried Eudoxia: "and imagine such a man having been a Christian! But why not?" she went on bitterly, "Eutropius is one! I always wish I had known Olympias sooner: but she never visited Marsa."

"Every one thought," continued Amantius, "that after her father's death Olympias would lead a life of holy virginity, so my informant told me, but her guardian, the

Prefect Procopius, was so anxious for her to accept the proposals of the excellent Nebridius, that she consented from a feeling of duty. She was soon a widow, and at eighteen she bade adieu to the world and its pleasures, and has ever since lived only for her Lord. Her faithful Theodosia is dead also, and the noble Olympias is a poor slave in the home of her fathers. Well, at last I saw her, and delivered your message, most noble Eudoxia, in the words you used. I said that you urged her to join with all who were suffering under the tyranny of the Consul, in a common appeal to the justice of the Emperor. The louder, the more numerous the voices, the more sure would be the fall of the favourite. The answer was very gentle, but very firm. 'If I were not concerned in the matter, and if I could hope to save another from oppression, I would appeal to Cæsar Augustus without hesitation. As it is, I can do nothing.' 'Do you think, then,' I asked, 'that it is not lawful to resist injustice, when it is possible, wherever we find it?' She replied by another question: 'Can we be sure that what we call injustice, when directed against ourselves, may not be in the hand of God, a hidden and higher kind of justice?' It was difficult to answer such simple humility; but I could not abandon your commission so easily, so I said: 'It cannot be difficult for so high-minded a person as you to put yourself out of the question, and to appeal against these unheard of proceedings as if they were directed against another.' 'That is mere cavilling,' she said quietly: 'I can only go to work straightforwardly.' I made one more attempt, representing that Cæsar Augustus is ignorant of the extent of her oppres-

sion, and that she alone can enlighten him on the matter, because Eutropius would reject any other witness as false and calumnious. ‘Let the illustrious Arcadius once learn the truth, and the fall of the favourite is certain.’ ‘And that means——?’ she asked. ‘His fate will rest with the Cæsar Augustus,’ I said, ‘who will be merciful as he always is.’ ‘But Eutropius has enemies,’ she returned: ‘the whole city—nay, the whole empire, is his deadly enemy. Do you not think that this universal hatred will clamour for the extremity of punishment, and that its irresistible tide will overpower the imperial clemency?’ I could say nothing, for I believe it would be so; and she went on: ‘You see, of course, that I can have no hand in this, and that it is an additional reason for my refusing to entertain the proposal of the most noble Eudoxia.’ ‘You are prepared, then,’ I said, ‘to remain in an imprisonment, which debars you from even entering a church, for as long as it pleases Eutropius?’ ‘O no,’ was her smiling answer, ‘but for as long as it pleases God.’ After that, I could say no more. She charged me to thank you humbly for your sympathy, and to entreat you to endeavour to persuade Elpidius to think better of this matter. Then she dismissed me.”

“And that was all that passed? You were not very pressing, Amantius, not very lavish of words.”

“Lady, I grant it; but what more could I say to a woman who gave the most unanswerable reasons in the simplest manner, and who was so dignified in her meekness that I could not venture on a word more than she permitted?”

“Well,” returned Eudoxia, “if you are not a clever

diplomatist, you are faithful and discreet. Of course this is not to be spoken of: as to the thing itself, I will manage it without Olympias."

"Most noble Eudoxia, you are displeased with me, I see, and with reason. Therefore——"

She interrupted him kindly: "Nonsense, Amantius, you must not take my words so seriously. What could you do with a fanatical woman?"

"If you would allow me to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, I might return a little improved, and——"

"And, perhaps, instead of returning at all, remain with the monks on the Mount of Olives, or in the pious Jerome's monastery at Bethlehem: I can prophesy how the pilgrimage would end. No, no, Amantius, I have answered you before on that subject. Whether you need improvement or not in God's sight I do not know, but I am quite satisfied with you as you are."

"Most noble Eudoxia!" said a youthful voice behind the curtain.

"Enter, Gunilda; what is it?" A remarkably beautiful girl, with a strikingly proud manner and bearing, came in, saying, with a foreign accent, "It is a messenger from my father to know when you can speak to the general."

"Go to him, Amantius, and learn whether Gainas is in the city: if so, let him come at once to me. He would not leave the army except on important business. Come here, Gunilda," she said, as soon as Amantius disappeared, drawing the young girl affectionately to a cushion at her feet, "tell me how you are getting on."

"Very well, lady."

“And have you made up your mind to be instructed?”

“No, lady.”

“How, then, can it be well with you,” said Eudoxia, vehemently, “while you continue ungrateful, disobedient, and a heretic?”

“Not ungrateful, dear lady: but I must speak as I think. And so I pray you to let me return to my father.”

“A camp is no place for a girl of fifteen, Gunilda: I brought you here to be with my ladies for that very reason. What do you miss here?”

“My people, lady, and my freedom!”

“Little barbarian!” said Eudoxia, smiling.

“O let me go!” cried the girl passionately, “not to the camp—O no! but let me see my home, the wooded banks of the Danube, once more.”

At this moment Amantius returned, saying: “Lady, Gainas is himself the messenger;” and a tall stately man in the dress of a common soldier appeared on the threshold.

“My father!” cried Gunilda; but the soldier stopped the eager movements of the girl by a sign, and Eudoxia said, “Go to my children, dear Gunilda;” then, turning to the Gothic general, she spoke in a low agitated voice: “What great trouble, or what great good fortune has brought you hither, and in this dress, noble Gainas?”

“Leo is dead, lady,” was the quiet answer. She uttered a low cry of joy; then drawing a deep sigh of relief, leant back among her cushions.

“Now we must act! Does the Cæsar Augustus know?” Gainas shrugged his shoulders silently.

“How did the miserable creature die?”

“Of sheer cowardice, I should say. He had crossed the Hellespont, and was waiting, helpless and terrified, for Tribigild’s next movement, and there in that panic of uncertainty and terror he found his death. And Ionia will be an easy prey now for Tribigild.”

“Nay, noble Gainas, you will save it, and defend the throne of your sovereign.”

“I will defend *him*, lady, and you, and your children, but not a throne on whose steps Eutropius plays the Emperor,” answered the haughty Goth. “Four years ago my hand set this Empire free from the brutal tyranny of Rufinus; and during all that time I have seen honours, riches, and the highest dignities of the state showered on his contemptible successor, while I, little trusted, and meanly rewarded, remain what I was then—general of the Goths. As long as Eutropius is at the helm, things may go as they will for me. Let Tribigild take Ionia—let him take Constantinople if he likes. I will take you, noble Eudoxia, and the Cæsar Augustus to my army in Thessaly: you will be in safety there. Then let Eutropius save the Empire and conquer Tribigild! But if *I* am to march against him, if *I* am to act at all—Eutropius must fall.”

“He shall fall!” said Eudoxia firmly; “there shall be an end of all this shame.”

## CHAPTER VI.

## OLYMPIAS AND GUNILDA.

After dismissing Amantius, Olympias returned to her own apartments—for the room in which she had received him was reserved for visitors, and therefore was furnished in some degree according to the fashion of the world, poor and mean as it had seemed to the chamberlain. Her relations came to see her occasionally, and their displeasure with her would only have been increased by the coarse matting which supplied the place of a carpet, and the common chairs which, instead of couches and cushions, formed the furniture of her own room. She sat down to her work—altar-cloths for poor churches—she had no longer the power of giving costlier offerings. She was lovely and noble in person as in character. In spite of the external brilliancy of her position, she had known sorrow from her childhood. She had lost literally every one near and dear to her, and at eighteen she was alone in the world. And the world could not understand the fair young widow with her contempt for all its gifts and pleasures: if her retired life had been caused by intense sorrow for her husband's loss, the thing would have been more intelligible: but as it was——! Olympias went quietly on her way, undeterred by blame and

ridicule. With all her decision and reserve of character, she had a vivid imagination and a loving heart ; so there was nothing stiff or hard in this quiet firmness. How could there be ? It was not that she was joyless or loveless, but that her joy and her love were not of this world. Such was Olympias, no creation of fiction, but one of the most noble of the many noble Christian women of antiquity.

It was growing dim in the little room, which, after the Eastern custom, was only lighted by the opened door : the principal rooms above had what we should now call sky-lights. The door of the room in which Olympias sat opened into a small inner court paved with bright-coloured tiles, in the midst of which played a sparkling fountain. She had let her work fall on her lap, and her beautiful dark eyes rested on the dancing water with a dreamy expression, half thoughtful and half sad. Suddenly a female figure stood in the door way, who threw back her veil with a quick gesture, and asked, as abruptly, “Are you the noble Olympias ?”

Theone followed her closely and said, “Pardon me, my honoured mistress, the lady would take no denial, though I told her you did not receive visitors so late.”

“Bring us a lamp, Theone,” said Olympias ; then turning to the stranger, “Who are you, lady, and what do you want with me ?”

“My name is Gunilda, and I am sent by the most noble Eudoxia. She bids me tell you that the fall of the man who persecuted you is unavoidable : so that your appeal to the Cæsar Augustus would not be the cause of his ruin, though it would have more weight than many others.”

“But how is it,” asked Olympias, in surprise, “that you, so young, and a foreigner as your accent shows, are sent so me with a confidential message?”

“My father,” answered Gunilda, “is well acquainted with the plans of the most noble Eudoxia, therefore she judged his daughter a fitting messenger. My father is Gainas, the general of the Gothic legion, . . . . . and I am indeed a foreigner and a stranger in this land.”

“Poor child!” said Olympias kindly.

“Not so, lady,” answered the girl proudly, “my father’s daughter is not poor. But *you* seem to be indeed poor, for your beautiful palace is bare and empty, and this room is hardly good enough for a common servant.”

“I am like you,” said Olympias, with a sweet smile, “my Father’s daughter is not poor.”

“No; I know that you are really very rich: they often speak of you at the court. But at this moment you are very poor; that lamp which your maid has brought is of common earthenware, such as only the poorest people use. . . . . Surely you will do your part to escape from the tyranny of this odious Eutropius?”

“It is not long since,” said Olympias, “that I sent my answer by the chamberlain Amantius.”

“It was an unsatisfactory answer,” returned Gunilda, “or I should not be here.”

“And do you think that one’s ideas of right and wrong change from one hour to another?”

Gunilda felt, as Amantius had done, that there was nothing more to be said. Presently she spoke again: “You are very generous—or very proud.”

“I do not know about that,” said Olympias simply; “but I know that it is written: ‘Love those who hate and persecute you,’ and I know . . . .” she broke off abruptly.

“Why do you stop?” asked Gunilda eagerly, “will you not let me know your reasons?”

“You are a Goth, and, I suppose, an Arian?” said Olympias.

“Both,” she answered haughtily.

“Then you would not understand the reason I was about to give; for the Christian charity which forgives our enemies springs from the Christian faith . . . . and you do not know it.”

“I do not,” said the young Goth seriously, “but Eudoxia does, and her way of thinking and acting is not like yours.”

“We shall all have to give account of our own actions, not those of others. Therefore we must neither judge others, nor blindly follow them. Eudoxia acts as she thinks right, and will not refuse me the same liberty of conscience,” answered Olympias gently.

“And why do you never appear at court?” cried Gunilda.

“My life since my husband’s death has been a very retired one. Besides, for the last three years I have been out of favour with the Cæsar Augustus, and, lastly, how do you think my dress would look there?”

“Strange, perhaps, but beautiful!” answered the girl. “I do not know how it is, but here—with you—I feel ready to weep.”

“I am sorry for that,” said Olympias kindly.

“You have no need, dear lady,” and Gunilda’s beautiful eyes glistened—“now I must go, but I thank you from my heart.”

“For what?” asked Olympias: “you quite understand my answer?”

“I thank you for being what you are,” and Gunilda looked wistfully round the shabby little room. “I shall never forget you in the splendour and gaiety of the Palace. But you may be easy about the message, I quite understand it, and I will deliver it faithfully.”

She rose to go: Olympias accompanied her to the court: it lay bathed in moonlight, and the drops of the fountain were changed into sparkling liquid diamonds, while the great peaceful stars looked down silently from their golden thrones.

“The stars are your torchbearers,” said Gunilda; “farewell, you holy and happy one.”

Olympias did not return to her room, but went to another, where she watched and prayed till dawn by the corpse of the poor man who had died that day.

## CHAPTER VII.

## EUDOXIA'S TRIUMPH.

The news of Leo's death had placed Eutropius in great perplexity: he summoned his council to discuss the question how to supply the vacant post, but the only result seemed to be an exhibition of the incompetency and cowardice of all its members. Osius, a *quondam* cook, and a great favourite with Eutropius, was just now under his displeasure for his obstinate refusal to take the command of Leo's troops; and the Consul's temper was not improved by his representations that Eutropius himself was really the proper person to do so. It was then suggested that Leo's death should be concealed, and the troops ordered to prevent Tribigild, at all risks, from crossing the Hellespont. It seems inconceivable that the idea of issuing such an order, to be carried out by troops without a general, could be seriously entertained: but it must be remembered that the council of Eutropius consisted of men as low-born, as ignorant, and as incompetent as himself. Osius considered that it would be easy to keep the Emperor in the dark, as the only person likely to be informed of the truth was Eudoxia, and her estrangement from him was a security for her silence. But Eutropius objected that the truth would infallibly be

known and spread among the people by means of the numerous vessels daily arriving from Ionia, and a universal panic would be the consequence. The inventive genius of the Spanish cook suggested, as a means of amusing the populace and diverting their interest, a general gathering of all the public dancers in the circus. "It would be a complete novelty," he said, "and a greater success than chariot-racing, or any of the usual shows." Eutropius received the idea favourably, only he urged that the nature of the entertainment must not be plainly described in the public announcement. "We must merely advertise an entirely new spectacle, otherwise let the Golden-mouth get an inkling of the truth, and mount his pulpit to warn the people in one of his fanatical outbursts, and perhaps to disclose this state of affairs in Ionia—and I will not answer for the consequences."

Other plans were ripening besides the Consul's. Very early in the morning Gainas asked an audience of the Emperor, who was utterly astonished at seeing him in Constantinople, and in the dress of a common soldier. There was a dark cloud on the general's brow, as he bent one knee and saluted Arcadius. "Hail, invincible Emperor ! and mayest thou ever be so."

"What news do you bring ? Have the hordes of the Huns crossed our frontiers of Thrace or Thessaly ?"

"Thrace and Thessaly are tranquil, for I am there," answered the haughty soldier ; and your throne is not threatened by the Huns."

"By Tribigild, then ?" asked the Emperor abruptly. Gainas bent his head. "Is Leo defeated ? Elpidius

mentioned rumours of evil tidings ; since then I have heard nothing : explain yourself fully."

" Your army in Iona is defeated, dispersed, destroyed — Leo is dead — Tribigild on the shores of the Hellespont, ready to cross to Constantinople."

" And you are here ! it was your duty to defend the Thracian coast of the Hellespont with your troops, and so avert the danger ! and in such a crisis you have dared to leave the army, and to appear before me in the Hebdomon Palace !"

" I *have* so dared," was the bold answer, " for it is time that, for once, the truth should be heard there—and in order to avoid exciting suspicion and alarm, the general of your army comes in this guise."

" And what is the truth which you say must be heard ?"

" Most Illustrious, Tribigild is my countryman, he *was* my friend : and even yet he trusts me. I have received a secret communication from him, informing me that he is willing to make peace with you, and to put down the insurrection of the Gothic colony in Phrygia, on one condition, and one *only*."

" And that condition is ?"

" The head of Eutropius !"

Arcadius started up. " The head of my wisest and most faithful servant !—do you imagine I shall make *that* the peace-offering to a barbarian chief ?"

" Is that servant wise who sends a cowardly Greek against a brave barbarian ?" asked Gainas with cutting coldness—" and what is his fidelity shown by ? *He* is a faithful servant to his lord who, unable to endure the de-

gradation of the empire, proposes a way of stopping it. The oppression, the venality of Eutropius call down the curses of the whole Eastern Empire on your throne. Is that fidelity?"

"He is personally faithful to me," stammered Arcadius.

"Like a dog—as he is," said the Goth scornfully: where is his fidelity, when the security of the throne, the peace of the kingdom, the welfare of your dominions are at stake?"

"Noble Gainas," pleaded Arcadius, "you will conquer Tribigild, and make your own terms with him afterwards."

"No, mighty Emperor," answered Gainas in the same tone of cold determination, "that I will not do. Shall the Goths slaughter one another that Eutropius may pursue his course of cruelty and perfidy unchecked? Never! Let his guilty head fall, and the Phrygian rebellion is at an end, for it is not against you, most clement Emperor, but against this man's unheard of tyranny."

"It is impossible!" groaned Arcadius: "Eutropius has enemies; he is slandered! I cannot believe the evil that is said of him."

An unwonted movement was heard at this moment in the ante-chambers. Gainas listened for an instant, then he said: "You will not believe me? well, then, I must hope that more eloquent lips than the rude Goth's will have the power which I have not."

As he spoke, Eudoxia entered. The inexpressive countenance of the Emperor was lighted up by a flash of

intense delight. “Eudoxia! and with the children! O welcome, welcome, my beloved one: tears, my Eudoxia? nay, do not weep.”

Eudoxia was very pale, her lips were trembling, and her eyes dim: she held her youngest child, Pulcheria, in her arms, the little Flaccilla was clinging to her dress: she came quickly to Arcadius and knelt at his feet. “Must I not weep? You, and only you, illustrious Emperor, can dry my tears.”

“How, Eudoxia?—speak—you have but to say what you wish, and it is done.”

Her answer came without a pause: “Eutropius must fall.”

“Now, mighty Emperor, will you believe me?” asked Gainas, bitterly.

“Leave us!” said Arcadius: but Eudoxia interposed authoritatively: “Not so, my lord and husband. Let him hear all, for it is in his power to confirm every charge which I have to make against Eutropius.”

“That unfortunate Eutropius! Gainas has already been telling me of his misdeeds; but what have *you* to do with them? He cannot have offended you, or, at least, not seriously.”

“What!” cried Eudoxia, “is the degradation of the empire over which my husband rules—are the curses which rest on his head and the heads of my innocent children, nothing to me? Can I see that wretched man guiding the sceptre which the great Theodosius once bore, which you, my lord and husband, still bear, and not weep tears of blood over its disgrace? Can I see how he deals with those who merit the deepest reverence,

and not feel burning indignation? He takes from the Church the ancient hallowed right of sanctuary, thus bitterly insulting the patriarch, and all good Christians in him;—and why? because he will not have one spot on earth where men may find shelter from his tyrannical violence. He persecutes ladies of the noblest birth and purest virtue, such as Olympias and Pentadia, in order to seize on their property. Every place, every dignity, has its price, and the fittest man is always the highest bidder!—and is all this nothing to me!"

She had risen from her knees, and stood in her tears, her beauty, and her anger, before the agitated Arcadius.

"Calm yourself, my Eudoxia—dry your tears, it shall not be so—things shall be altered, only be calm."

"No," she answered, passionately, "I can not, and will not: I have kept silence, and suffered in silence only too long: now I will speak! That vile Eutropius stands between me and my husband."

"You are mistaken, Eudoxia; on this point you are wrong," cried Arcadius.

"And do you imagine that I do not know why I am not Augusta?" she asked slowly, and fixing her eyes on Arcadius, who remained silent and embarrassed.

"I repeat it, he stands between us: your silence proves the truth of my words: and you say he cannot have offended me! Arcadius, what woman would not be offended—outraged? *You* would have made me Augusta long ago—you would have made your wife Empress: but—Eutropius will not allow it: he fears my influence, he fears my looking into things and seeing how

they stand: and therefore he comes between us, and I am not Augusta!"

"I will make you so this very day!" exclaimed Arcadius, in increasing excitement.

"My lord and husband, I will thank you for it gladly and gratefully, if, before conferring this honour on me, you order Eutropius to leave the Palace, the city—if possible, the Empire. There is not room for both of us in this palace and at your side:—let him go, and let him suffer that with which he has threatened me."

"Threatened *you*? Eudoxia! what do you mean?—who can dare to threaten *you*?"

"Eutropius dares to do anything—with impunity," she said, bitterly.

"It is too much—speak, Eudoxia!"

"I meant not to speak of it, to force my lips to silence, though they were burning to tell the insult. So I asked you, my lord, to grant me a time of solitude and retirement. I wished to compose my mind, to struggle with the indignation I felt, and to conquer it."

"What was it that he threatened? speak!"

"You know," said Eudoxia, "that I have a woman's love for jewels, and ornaments: Eutropius knows it too, and in order to please me, he has from time to time brought me beautiful diamonds, just as one might coax a child with toys. This happened a few days ago: they were splendid diamonds, and I said I would have them set in the diadem which I would wear as Augusta. He answered, 'that title can only be borne by the mother of an heir to the throne.' I cried 'Yes; it can be borne in any case by the wife of the Emperor!' Then he dared

to answer: ‘*I made you the Emperor’s wife, and only I can make you Augusta. Remember, too, that I, who raised you to the throne, can drag you from it.*’ Yes—he dared to use this language to me, to your wife—the mother of your children—he to me—Eutropius to Eudoxia!’” As she spoke, her face had turned still paler than before, her lips trembled so that she could scarcely speak, and her voice was harsh and altered. As she ended she gave way altogether, and sank into a chair in a passion of tears.

Arcadius, out of himself at the sight of Eudoxia’s anguish, cried out, “Enough! let him be summoned hither: the wretch shall be punished as you demand, and as is only too just. He shall be banished for ever from our presence, stripped of all his titles, honours, dignities, and possessions; and he shall end his life where he has sent worthier men to end theirs—in Colchis or some oasis of the Libyan Desert.”

“Hail, mighty Emperor! the state is saved!” shouted the triumphant Gainas, as he rushed out impetuously, to lose no time in having the Consul summoned, and to spread the tidings of the favourite’s doom in the city, where it caused more rejoicing than the news of a hundred victories. Eudoxia’s passionate tears had done what no arguments, however just and reasonable, would ever have accomplished—Arcadius gave up his favourite.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## AN UNLAMENTED FALL.

Without a suspicion of anything wrong, Eutropius followed the messenger who summoned him to the imperial presence. It was rather early, certainly, but that was all the better, as he was impatient to inform the Emperor of his project for the public dances, so as to commence preparations at once. As he approached the imperial apartments, it struck him that there was an unusual excitement there. The Emperor might be ill—dying. His thoughts went further: Arcadius had no son, his brother, the boy Honorius, was far away in the West: why should not he, Consul and Patrician, be Cæsar Augustus? All this passed through his mind as he went, and the eyes of all whom he met followed him with scorn and hatred. He stopped suddenly, thunderstruck, for Gainas was just coming out of the Emperor's room.

“ You here ? ” he faltered, pale and confused. “ Why not ? ” answered the Goth; and seizing the arm of Eutropius, he drew him into the room, crying, “ Here is the traitor, mighty Emperor ! Punish him as he deserves.”

Ashy-white under the paint on his cheeks, with trembling limbs, and eyes wild with terror, Eutropius fell on his knees, for Eudoxia was sitting in her triumphant

beauty beside Arcadius. The whole truth flashed in an instant on the wretched man: “they are reconciled—Tribigild has submitted, and I am lost!”

“Miserable wretch?” said the Emperor, “here is your sentence. Take it, and leave my presence.”

“Mercy! pity!” shrieked Eutropius, without offering to take the parchment to which the imperial signature had just been affixed.

“Read it to him Gainas,” said Arcadius.

“And let the doors be opened,” added Eudoxia, “so that all who are here may rejoice in the justice of the Cæsar Augustus.”

She was obeyed, and all the chamberlains crowded up to hear and to see—all but one;—while Gainas read in a loud voice: “The Patrician Eutropius, late Lord-Chamberlain and Consul, is deprived of all his titles, offices, and dignities; his property is forfeited to the crown, and he is banished to the farthest shore of the Black Sea.”

A shout of joy ran through the palace, while Eutropius, grovelling at Eudoxia’s feet, sobbed out: “O most noble Eudoxia, glorious Augusta—save my life!”

She turned from him with a gesture of intense scorn: but Arcadius said, “You have just heard that your life *is* spared, although you deserve a thousand deaths.”

Gainas whispered to Eudoxia, “Lady you were too merciful.”

“I choose to punish, not to destroy,” she answered haughtily.

“Away—out of my sight!” repeated Arcadius. “Go and get together what is necessary, for in two hours you must be ready to start.”

“They will kill me!” wailed the fallen favourite, crawling on his knees to the Emperor’s feet: “be merciful—do not let me be murdered.”

“This scene is horrible—I cannot bear it,” cried Eudoxia: she clapped her hands, and Amantius made his way into the room, through the crowd at the door.

“Take him away, Amantius—and see that he is ready in time: he is helpless from terror.” Amantius obeyed, and led, or rather bore him out of the room. Even in the first ante-chamber a storm of reproaches assailed the miserable Eutropius: but the farther they advanced from the imperial apartments, the fiercer grew the insults, the wilder the cries of rage and triumph, and Amantius could scarcely save him from personal ill-usage. The fallen favourite seemed neither to see nor to hear: he was half senseless with the agony of terror. Amantius kept incessantly shouting through the yells of fury and threatening gestures which surrounded them: “In the name of the Empress let no one touch him.....he is banished .....he is leaving the city.”.....

“Yes—and taking his ill-gotten gains with him! Out with the gold he has stolen from better men!—he shall pay for his crimes with his life—what is banishment for guilt like his?” so the furious voices shouted on all sides; and still Amantius cried: “Touch him not—lay no hands on him, in the name of the Empress!” and at last succeeded in getting him to his own quarters in the palace.

“Now you are safe: prepare for your journey, and wait till the guards come for you.”

“I—safe?” cried Eutropius—“do you not see that every one has forsaken me? where are my friends? my

servants ? there is not one to be seen : and hark to the tumult outside ; the din of voices, voices of men thirsting for my blood !”

“ Compose yourself : the soldiers will take care of you.”

“ The soldiers !.....Gainas has stirred them up against me : they will fall upon me like wild beasts—they will murder me : or—worse still, they will give me up to the people to be torn limb from limb !”

“ Miserable man !” said Amantius, overcome by the sight of this agony of fear for so wretched an existence : “ think on God !”

“ Yes, yes ; I will,” cried Eutropius, suddenly inspired with a gleam of hope : “ farewell, Amantius ; I thank you.....now go, leave me : I would be alone.”

Amantius hesitated—“ You are not thinking of killing yourself ?” he asked anxiously.

“ I ?—you are mad to ask me : is not my one desire to live—only to live ?.....Even if it were to be in a Scythian or Libyan desert, still to live !”

“ God help you,” said Amantius, as he went to inform Eudoxia that he had done her bidding. She met him radiant with joy. “ Congratulate me ! the Emperor has summoned all his officers of state to announce to them the title of Augusta. I am Empress now, Amantius !”

Louder and louder grew the fury of the populace against the hated Eutropius : they rushed in crowds to the theatre, the circus, the forum, to pull down his statutes, drag them through the streets, and break them in pieces : others surrounded the door through which the Praetorian guards were to take him to the harbour : while

some flung stones and dirt against the walls which hid him from their sight, yelling out curses on the man before whom, but yesterday, they had crouched in slavish submission. But the object of their hatred had escaped them. The moment he was alone he hastened to wash the paint from his corpse-like face ; then tearing off his rich robes he dressed himself in those of a scullion, and soiled his hair and his hands with soot and ashes. No one interrupted him : he was utterly forsaken. Then he slipped hastily through the back entrance of the palace, and hurried by quiet by-streets into the city : he went on in an anguish of breathless haste, yet every now and then he slackened his speed, lest it should excite suspicion. But no one noticed him—no one guessed that this shabby miserable old slave was the Consul Eutropius.

Now he is near his goal : like a hunted beast he dashes across the great square, and stands panting in the portico of Sta. Sophia. In his haste he stumbled against two women, one of whom looked at him, and cried, “Eutropius !” “Silence ! . . for the love of pity !” he whispered, and hastened on, while the women passed into the square. The one who had recognized him turned towards the Patriarch’s palace, saying : “We had better tell the holy father at once : something extraordinary must have happened.” The deaconesses Pentadia and Procla were at once admitted to an interview, in a poor little room, which was more like a monk’s cell than the apartment of a prince of the Church.

“Reverend Father,” said Pentadia, who was much agitated, ‘the Church has received into sanctuary the man who sought to rob her of this privilege. Eutro-

pius has fled, disguised as a slave, to the Altar of Sta. Sophia."

"Divine Providence!" exclaimed Chrysostom, "how wonderful are Thy ways! . . . and you, Pentadia, to whom he refused this refuge, were the one to recognise him?"

"It seems that till I saw him no one had discovered him," she answered, "but he cannot remain long concealed."

"What can have occurred, now," said the Patriarch musingly, "to account for this? Well—be it what it may, the Church will protect him." Some priests who entered at this moment confirmed the news of the disgrace and flight of the Consul.

"When the Prætorians went to conduct him to the harbour," said Serapion, "they found his dwelling deserted. They are seeking him everywhere, and the people are mad with fury. Do you not hear them? they are coming nearer: what a hideous yell! they are on his track, poor wretch!"

The women trembled at the sounds: "Go to my little hospital," said Chrysostom: "you will be in your own element there, and forget your fears: I will go to the Church."

"You will save this unhappy man, holy father, that he may not die in his sins?" asked Pentadia.

"I cannot save him, my daughter," answered the Patriarch: "pray for him, and ask God to protect His Sanctuary from the hand of violence."

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE SANCTUARY OF STA. SOPHIA.

It was a marvel of magnificence, that Cathedral of Sta. Sophia, which Constantine had adorned with such lavish splendour. The doors were of cedar inlaid with ivory and amber—the latter being then very rare, and greatly sought after ; the walls of marble, covered with bright graceful arabesques. The galleries round the dome were supported on pillars of porphyry, alabaster, verde antique, and the beautiful rose-coloured granite of Egypt. Silver boat-shaped lamps bore the undying light before the High Altar, and, candelabra of the same metal, in the form of trees, had large clumps of wax lights on their branches. Round the open screen which divided the sanctuary from the rest of the church, were twelve silver pillars, between which stood ten silver statues, representing Our Lord and His Blessed Mother, the four Evangelists, and the four greater Prophets. The altar was a mass of jewels, gold, and pearls ; indeed the whole building was a treasury of art—the pride of the Emperors, the joy of the faithful, and the crown of Constantinople.

But on this day not one of the crowds which filled the church to overflowing gave a thought to its beauty and

magnificence: every eye was fixed on an object which contrasted startlingly with everything that surrounded it. Stripped of the borrowed splendour of his dignity and office, half dead with anguish and terror, the miserable Eutropius stood in all his native ugliness and insignificance, clinging convulsively to a pillar near the altar. The crowd which filled the vast space of the cathedral was silent and motionless in breathless suspense. What would be the end? A new law had taken away the right of sanctuary, the innocent and guilty might be torn from the altar by the Praetorian guards at the Emperor's command. Would that command be given? would the new law be used for the first time against its framer? what would the Patriarch do? Then, suddenly, in that wonderfully impressive hush of an expectant multitude, was heard the clatter of arms, the tramp of heavy feet: the Praetorians! They are coming nearer—they fill the nave, they pass on, regardless of the crowds, who cannot give way, but are crushed back by the advancing soldiers. Onward they push to their prey, who stares with the fixed gaze of despair at the great iron serpent slowly wending its way along, with fierce eyes full of vengeance and death. Every nerve of his body quivers with terror—the sweat of agony is on his brow;—every now and then a hoarse rattle comes from his parched throat, and a convulsive movement distorts his features. It was a horrible sight. But no one felt pity: all were absorbed in breathless expectation.

A slight movement in the part of the cathedral leading to the sacristy: then a whisper—“It is he—he is coming: room for the Patriarch! The Golden-mouth is going to

speak." Somehow or other, room was made for him, and the Prætorians stood literally wedged in, while the Patriarch mounted the pulpit.

"There he stood, a small slight figure—a pale, delicate, sickly face—a very picture of bodily weakness—but bold with the boldness of a good conscience, and majestic with the consciousness of the sacred right he was ready to defend. In a loud thrilling voice he bade the soldiers and the people withdraw, and not profane God's sanctuary by vulgar curiosity or brutal violence: the law had never yet been executed: it should not be executed now—God's mercy forbade it. Submissively, as though the Patriarch were their general, the rude Prætorians obeyed. The people followed them, to relieve their long suppressed feelings in the open air. The sudden change in his dangerous position was too much for the miserable Eutropius, and he fell senseless to the ground. By the Patriarch's orders, he was carried to a room adjoining the sacristy, and refreshed with wine and restoratives.

"He has no martyr's blood in his veins, this creature here," said a young acolyte, who was attending to him.

"And his cause is no martyr's cause," answered a deacon: "self-love is always cowardly: the love of God alone gives courage."

"What a sight it was," cried the boy, "to see the holy father defending this old half-dead hunted vermin by nothing but his words!"

"Ah, that it was!" said another. "I could not help thinking of the day when my poor soul will have to be judged, and how the devil will accuse it, and my angel

guardian try to defend it : I *did* pray hard that my conscience may be better off than this poor wretch's."

Hardly had Chrysostom reached his house, when a messenger summoned him to the Emperor. The news spread, and grew in spreading, and when he appeared in the great square of Sta. Sophia, the people surrounded him with lamentations : " You will be arrested, holy father,—sent into banishment instead of that wretch ! . . . . You have sacrificed yourself for him in vain : but we will avenge you—you and ourselves ! Give him up, holy father, to the just anger of the Emperor, and save yourself."

The Patriarch said a soothing word every now and then as he hastened through the excited crowds to the palace. He found Arcadius in a state of great irritation : Gainas had threatened him with a rebellion of the whole army in the case of Eutropius' escaping.

" Holy father !" exclaimed the Emperor, " what have you been about ? Defending a traitor, and endangering my throne ! Is this lawful ? "

" Your throne, most clement Arcadius, is strengthened rather than endangered by the protection which the Church gives this unhappy man from his bloodthirsty enemies," replied the Patriarch calmly.

" The Church no longer possesses the right to give this protection."

" Pardon me, mighty Emperor, if I reply that she cannot lose a right which is inalienable."

" It *is* lost, lost by an imperial decree rescinding the privilege : and I scarcely imagine that your Holiness thinks yourself at liberty to defy the laws."

“ This law, Most Illustrious, was framed by the man against whom it is now directed : his motives for making it were very low and very unworthy : his aim was to take the last refuge away from nobler misfortune than his own. No sooner was the law promulgated that one common cry of indignation protested against it : to this hour it has never been enforced. It is condemned by the reverence of the people for the Church.”

“ But it exists, notwithstanding,” cried Arcadius, “ it has my sanction ! and even your Holiness has to submit to the laws.”

“ Surely, most clement Emperor, so long as they are not in opposition to a higher law. I cannot allow the rights of the Church to be infringed : and this is one of her most precious rights—to be a place of mercy, a city of refuge. It is an inalienable right, inherited from her Divine Founder. A sinner embraced His Sacred Feet, weeping ; and she rose up a Saint.”

“ That is *one* instance, reverend father !”

“ Yes, *one* instance, one for which all ages give thanks, and which is an eternal precedent to the Church ; and who can say what work may be done in secret ? If she cannot save the body, she must seek to save the immortal soul. But soul and body are lost when the offender is seized and slain in that moment of madness, when he is a fugitive, half dead with anguish and fear. And not he alone—his pursuers also fall into deadly sin. The Church would prevent this : O pious Arcadius, do you make that a reproach to her ?—or to me who am merely the minister of her authority ? And remember, we have hitherto been speaking of a criminal, Arcadius !

let us now turn to the innocent. Think that, but for this blessed right of sanctuary, such a woman as Pentadia would have been torn from the altar, banished to Libya, and there killed—God only knows how—with her husband. May not such a case occur again and again? and ought you not to thank God for this merciful restraint on lawless passions?"

"The life of Eutropius is not threatened, holy father: he is to be banished only."

"Can you answer for your Prætorians, most clement Arcadius? or for Gainas, his deadly enemy? or for the enraged people? Give all these unsettled elements time to compose themselves—give this unhappy Eutropius time to submit himself to the chastening hand of God. I know you only desire to do what is just and right: well, then, let your desire be the same as God's, who desires not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live."

"I am not cruel," as your Holiness knows," answered Arcadius, "but Gainas insists on the death of Eutropius, and the Prætorians clamour for it."

"Justice demands that he should be removed from this city," said the Patriarch, "and you will banish him to satisfy justice, not the revenge of Gainas, nor the ferocity of the soldiery. Oppose their clamours and blood-thirstiness by your mercy and wisdom and dignity, and they will be silent for very shame. They will see that their will cannot be carried out, if only, mighty Arcadius, you will assert your own."

"And I will: your Holiness is right! they shall find that I am master. But pray for me, my venerable

father, that God may give me words to restrain them ; and rest assured that this law shall be revoked. You have shown me the truth in this matter, and I thank you for it."

Arcadius took leave of the Patriarch with the affectionate respect of a son, and the friends who were anxiously expecting the termination of the interview read good news in his face.

" Things have gone well, holy father, I am sure of it," cried Serapion.

" Pray for the Emperor," answered Chrysostom, " he has restored the right of sanctuary, and spared the life of Eutropius."

" Your Holiness is like Orpheus !" exclaimed Isidore, another young deacon, in a burst of poetical enthusiasm. " By the charm of his lyre he tamed wild beasts and made stones feel : and your words have worked quite as great a wonder—checked the Prætorians, and given courage to the Emperor."

" Give God the honour, my son, and pray for the Emperor ;" and, so saying, the Patriarch returned to his house, the door of which was besieged by crowds waiting to welcome him back. But, though Chrysostom's holy and self-denying life, his love for the poor, the eloquence of his preaching, and his simple-minded devotion to his sacred calling, had made him the idol of the people, and the very model of perfection to all who loved virtue and desired to lead a Christian life, yet there were many (and among them were monks and priests) who hated the patriarch as vice ever hates purity. His predecessor, the Senator Nectarius, had been altogether of another stamp,

and had not exercised the salutary discipline over his clergy, which Chrysostom deemed indispensable for those who, living in the world, were not to be of it. Thus the careless, the worldly, and the half-hearted, shunned and hated the light which revealed their own darkness. There were some such men among those round the Patriarch's palace: and when he announced the joyful news that the Church was still to enjoy her right of sanctuary, and one loud cheer answered him, there were words of dislike and bitterness spoken even then.

“ He may have to seek this asylum himself some day : who knows ? ” said Florus to Eugenius.

“ He *will* have to seek it, if the feeling against him goes on increasing,” was the answer. Both hated Chrysostom for the holy life, which was a living reproach to theirs.

## CHAPTER X.

## NATURE AND GRACE.

It was Sunday—the day on which Olympias felt the burden of her captivity weigh most heavily: she was shut out from the house of God—excluded from the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries.

“O dearest lady,” said Theone, “it is such a sorrow to enjoy a privilege which you cannot share.”

“Do not grieve,” Olympias answered; “I can unite myself in spirit to those penitents who were excluded from the churches till they had humbly performed their penance.”

“But we all know, lady, that your place is not among them.”

Olympias smiled: “I know that my place is where God has appointed it.”

When they were all gone Olympias visited her sick, attended to their wants, and said some prayers with them: then she went to her own room, and remained for some time lost in thinking of what she honestly thought the great grace of being thus a prisoner for the love of God. Like all delicate and noble characters, she had the keenest sense of natural beauty, but she suffered no earthly charm, however innocent, to gain a power over her, and allowed

weeks and months to pass without going on the terrace, from which there was a magnificent view over the Propontis. In the time of her father and her husband this terrace was a bright, beautiful garden, gay with flowers and fountains, and dotted here and there with elegant little tents, fitted up with comfortable seats, in which it was a real luxury to enjoy the soft sea breeze. But all this was a tale of the past, and none of the attractions of the place remained except the view over the sea—a charm that nothing can alter. Olympias went to the terrace on this Sunday morning, and, leaning on the parapet, looked thoughtfully at the blue dancing waves before her. “Like the life of the soul,” she thought; the surface always in restless movement, unsatisfied, longing—and perfect rest in the lower depths”—

“Olympius! what a wonder!” cried an eager voice, and a lady stepped out of the door leading on the terrace: “I have been watching you full three minutes, and you have been doing nothing all that time! neither reading, nor sewing, nor looking after your beloved cripples. It is quite delightful to find that you can ever be idle like the rest of the world.”

“That is the way you catch me, is it?” said Olympias smiling: “and what brings you here, dear Thais?”

“Just see what a proof of affection I am giving you,” cried Thais, a very pretty young woman, and a near relation of Olympias: “I have missed church to pay you a visit.”

“Thais! I do not like such a proof as that!”

“Then you are an ungrateful creature to say so,” was the careless answer: “I was dying to bring you the

good news ; I wanted to be the first to tell it, and I dare say I am. Shut up as you are, you have most likely not heard yet of the fall of Eutropius."

" Ah, it has come then !" exclaimed Olympias, thinking of Eudoxia's messengers.

" Why, you do not seem surprised," said Thais.

" One never can be surprised at the fall of any one in such an insecure position."

" Well, at any rate, you must be very glad of it ; for now you will be free : it is no one's interest now to shut you up, and to devour your property ; and all your relations, I your old playfellow among them, will attack the Emperor on the subject. Do you know they say he is quite a different man ? full of courage and eloquence—fancy that ! You see, Eutropius had fled to Sta. Sophia, and the Patriarch was protecting him. The Prætorians were ready to storm the Palace, shaking their spears, and crying out that Eutropius should be given up. My husband was at the Palace and saw the whole thing. He could not believe his own ears when the Emperor declared he would speak to them : and he did it too ! He told them what a sin it would be to violate the right of sanctuary, and that murder would certainly be the consequence. They wavered a little, but did not quite give in. Then the Emperor spoke so warmly, pleaded so earnestly, and actually with tears ! that every one was wonderstruck, because, you know, our good Emperor is not a person of quick feelings. It must be observed, however, that the Patriarch had just left him : so this unexpected energy may be partly accounted for. Anyhow, the Prætorians took themselves off quite quietly.

Eudoxia (who is, of course, at the bottom of it all) is proclaimed Augusta, and everybody is charmed. How long this will last is another question ! but one thing is certain, Eudoxia has got the power which Eutropius has lost, and I will answer for her using it !”

Olympias listened quietly to this torrent of words.

“ And now, Olympias, what do you intend doing ?”

“ Just what I am doing now, only without let or hindrance.”

“ I declare you are intolerable, with your mania of being better than other people !” cried Thais : “ have you really not had enough of it these six years that you have been a widow ?”

“ If by ‘mania’ you mean my way of life, dear Thais, I answer ‘ No :’ suppose I were to ask you if you are not tired of your married life after eight years ?”

“ O that is quite another thing ! I have a kind husband, dear children, an ample fortune, and a brilliant position : in short, I am very happy, and one does not tire of happiness. But you, Olympias, you persist in leading a miserable life, when you might be happy if you would—no wonder I thought this dreary whim of yours might be over. O, if you only would marry Elpidius, how happy it would make us all—the Emperor and Empress included.”

“ My dear Thais, people do not marry to please other people, but because it is their vocation. A second marriage is not mine : you know that no persecution has been able to alter my determination : why should I change it without any reason now that I am free ?”

“ The reason is,” cried Thais, “ that no one has a right

to spoil their life. Why, only look at this place : it used to be quite a little paradise. Have you forgotten how we used to play together at hide-and-seek here among those myrtle bushes ? And those delicious evenings after your marriage, when Nebridius had the terrace illuminated, and we used to sit in the tents listening to the sweet music which was played in the house ! and then when we were tired of listening, we used to go down those steps to the grotto where the boats were kept, and sailed out far, watching the trembling line of light which was the reflection of this terrace—and only see what a change ! Olympias, is it a proper thing for the daughter of Anicius Secundus to live in a ruin ? I call it a perfect wilderness. We are now sitting on a pedestal which supported a flower vase ! I declare you will make it impossible for your friends to visit you, as you have only broken stones to offer them by way of seats.”

“ You happened to find me here, dear Thais,” said Olympias quietly : “ I can offer you a comfortable seat in my parlour.”

“ I was thinking of you, not of myself, as you very well know,” replied Thais crossly. “ You place yourself outside the circle in which you were born, for which you were educated”—

Olympias interrupted her : “ Not so ! my beloved Theodosia did not educate me for any narrow sphere of life, but before all, and above all, for God—for His service and His love.”

“ O, of course,” replied Thais, “ we are all Christians, I hope, and so we love and serve God—only not in this exclusive fashion. That is just what we complain of in

you. I should not think of speaking of myself; but look at the Empress, how pious she is, how devout in God's service—what vast sums she spends on the poor and sick, and in building churches!"

"God reward her," said Olympias.

"Well, all that does not prevent her liking dress and gaiety, cheerful society, and jewels, and every thing which it is natural to like: why should you be different from the Empress?"

"My dear Thais, I never dreamt of comparing myself with her."

"Olympias!" said Thais, with an important air, "I have a grand scheme, only I cannot accomplish it without you: it would be for the good of thousands—of the whole empire."

"Are you serious?" asked Olympias, in surprise.

"Perfectly serious. Now just listen. Suppose you marry Elpidius: that makes Arcadius your cousin, you would be thrown very much with him and the Empress, and could not fail to gain great influence over both. Then, of course, through my relationship with you, I should see a good deal of Eudoxia too, and she would naturally prefer the companionship of young women near her own age, to that of Marsa and her set. That arrogant Marsa! it would be delightful to see her influence lessen as ours grew; and I am sure it would be a great benefit to the court and the city. She is universally disliked, and any ladies who supplanted her would be very popular. Now that Eutropius has fallen, Eudoxia will reign supreme, for the Patriarch cannot always be working miracles on the Emperor. Now don't you see how

naturally it would come about that, through our influence with her, our husbands would get the reins pretty much in their own hands? Is not that a grand scheme? is it not worth the sacrifice of your whims and fancies, which can do good to no one but your dear cripples?"

"And my own soul," added Olympias, "which I have to save for the kingdom of God? With the kingdoms of this world I have nothing to do. God has not committed them to me: He will not require an account of them from me."

"I might have known," said Thais slightly, "that your narrow views would never take in a scheme like mine."

"I certainly do not in the least understand such matters. But it seems to me, dear Thais, that your plan is something like an intrigue—putting down some and setting up others. Take care! it is slippery and dangerous ground."

"I told you I could not manage it without your help—at least not yet. And it would be such a good time to begin!" sighed Thais.

"Is not Eutropius a warning against climbing such dizzy heights?" asked Olympias.

"Eutropius! a low-born, contemptible freedman, a warning to me?" cried Thais, half astonished and half indignant.

"Are you safer because you are nobly born? Not slaves only, but all men are liable to make a bad use of power."

"I am quite aware of that. I really have learnt *something* from the Patriarch's discourses. And it is too bad

to be compared to Eutropius—and by a friend and relation too," said the offended Thais.

Olympias said everything she could think of to pacify her, reiterating assurances that she had not the least idea of vexing her.

"Well, I forgive you everything—all your eccentricities into the bargain—if you will marry Elpidius."

"What should you say if I were to propose that you should separate from your husband and choose another?"

"I should say that you had lost your senses."

"Well," answered Olympias calmly, "just as you are bound to your husband for life, so I have given myself to God. I hope this simple answer has given you the key to my whole life, and convinced you that every proposal of marriage can only be answered by me in one way."

"O Heavens! I guessed that was it! O, my poor Olympias, what have you done?"

"I have thrown myself into the arms of God—a safe and happy shelter!" said Olympias.

"O you poor, poor thing!" Thais went on, with genuine compassion: "you have just buried yourself alive at four-and-twenty—and you might be so happy! O it is perfectly dreadful!"

How strangely different were the lives of these two, which promised to be so much alike when they played hide-and-seek together in the myrtle thicket!

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE PATRIARCH'S SERMON.

The conversation was interrupted by the return of Theone and her companions. They all seemed in a great state of excitement, and two of them, who were the more immediate and confidential attendants of their mistress, came out on the terrace. "Elpis! Theone! what is it? what has happened?" asked Olympias.

"Pardon our intrusion, noble lady, but may we speak? We have seen and heard wonderful things." Olympias looked at Thais inquiringly.

"Of course," she exclaimed, "I am dying to hear the news."

"Let us come within," said Olympias, smiling, "you will listen better on a comfortable couch, will you not?"

"You are a good creature, Olympias! You know all about the pleasant things of life, and give them up notwithstanding! And you are so pale! If you only would use the least little mite of paint!—but of course you have not got such a thing: and then, to be sure, nobody sees you except your maids and your cripples." As Thais sank down on a couch, her feelings were a mixture of compassion for her cousin, and of self-

congratulation, that *she* could not be the subject of similar pity.

“Now then, Elpis, Theone—whichever of you is spokeswoman,—begin your wonderful story. Has the Emperor conquered the Goths?”

“No, lady; but we have seen a victory of another sort,” said Theone.

“As we were going to Sta. Sophia,” Elpis began, “the people were flocking thither in crowds: it was like Easter-day—only, I must say, there seemed more excitement than devotion. They were pressing, talking, shouting, till we were half frightened, and quite thankful to get through a side door to the deaconesses’ place, where the noble Pentadia always allows us to come: we should never have managed it by the great doors, there was such a crowd. In the nave they were literally packed together, and of all those thousands nothing stirred but their eyes. I ventured one look round—the Holy Sacrifice had not begun—and I saw the Consul Eutropius by the altar embracing a pillar! O, lady, imagine him, your persecutor, in the sanctuary of the church—the very man who has been shutting you out from God’s house—and looking so miserable, so abject! I do not know how I felt; whether I was glad or sorry about it all. Then came our holy father, and addressed the people. O, if only you had heard him! I cannot repeat his words—and even if I could, the manner, the voice, the expression—in short, the *soul* would be wanting. ‘Vanity of vanities—all is vanity,’ that was his text; and you cannot imagine how impressive it seemed with such a terrible living illustration of it before our eyes. Then, when he

asked Eutropius what had become of all his flatterers—of all those who had applauded him so loudly in the theatre and the circus, in return for the sums he had expended on the stage and the race-course—when he said how they were changed into fierce packs of wolves, crying for vengeance and thirsting for his blood, and how the Church alone, that holy Church which he had trampled under foot, took compassion on him and sheltered him—then, lady, I could not restrain my tears, and many others felt as I did ; indeed every one was more or less moved. Then the Patriarch went on to say how the Church in her courageous compassion stands between the crimes of the culprit and the wrath of the Emperor and the people's rage, entreating both sides not to yield to revengeful passions, and not to stain a just indignation with rash blood-shedding. In a few moments the Holy Sacrifice would be offered for sinners as well as for the just ; how could anyone, who then prayed sincerely ‘Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us,’ contemplate dragging the unhappy fugitive from his only asylum, and delivering him to a dreadful death ? At this point a thrill of agitation ran through the crowd. Some wept silently, and some aloud : many left the church : others fell on their knees and prayed. Looks of pity began to be cast on the miserable man, who stood there not knowing whether to hope or to fear ; and then out of the sea of human sorrows rose the mighty mystery of the great Sacrifice to the Throne of everlasting Mercy, and thence dropped its gracious dews on our hearts. O, lady, I thought of you, and how you would forgive your oppressor with all your heart.”

“Indeed I do, dear Elpis,” said Olympias.

“Well,” inquired Thais, “what came next?—for you know, Eutropius cannot possibly stand holding that pillar all his life.”

“It will be easy to find a room for him within the limits of the sanctuary,” answered Olympias. “When Pentadia took refuge there from Eutropius, she had a little cell assigned to her adjoining the room where the deaconesses instruct the female catechumens, and one of them supplied her with necessaries. Something of the same kind will be arranged for Eutropius.”

“It was so striking,” said Theone, “to see Pentadia all the time: she sat motionless, and apparently calm as a marble statue, but every now and then a large tear rolled from her down-cast eyes, and when the Patriarch said, ‘Forgive us our trespasses,’ her lips moved as if she were saying the prayer with him. If Eutropius had seen her, his heart must have been melted with sorrow and repentance.”

“My dear child,” said Thais, “Eutropius has too much upon his conscience to be troubled with remorse for *one* evil action; and I cannot fancy him passing a couple of months in sanctuary as contentedly as Pentadia.”

“As we returned, we heard people speaking of his banishment to Cyprus,” said Elpis.

“To Cyprus,” laughed Thais: imagine that monster of ugliness in the island of the queen of love and beauty! what a satire!”

“Lady! a messenger from the Emperor,” announced an attendant; and Thais, Elpis, and Theone cried simultaneously, “He is come to give you your liberty!”

“Noble Olympias,” said the chamberlain, who now entered, “the illustrious Emperor greets you heartily, and announces to you that he has issued orders to the Prefect of the city, to deliver up to you this day the document nominating him your guardian: for it is the Emperor’s will that you should henceforth enjoy perfect and unrestricted liberty as to your person and property.”

“I thank the Cæsar Augustus gratefully for having so soon remembered his servant,” answered Olympius: “I pray you to tell him that I will take care to spend my fortune so that my imperial lord will not repent of having restored it to me.”

“Tell me,” said Thais eagerly, after the messenger had retired, “tell me what you mean to do with it?”

And Olympias answered gently, “To serve God.”

## CHAPTER XII.

## A CHRISTIAN'S REVENGE, AND A WORLDLING'S GRATITUDE.

In the wildest ravings of delirium, tormented in body, and bewildered in mind, Eutropius lay in the little room which had been assigned to him. All his limbs were convulsed, and the breath came from his throat in agonized gasps, like those of a dying man. His face was darkly flushed, and his eyes starting. An apoplectic attack was feared, and the watchers beside him were anxious to send for a surgeon to open a vein. But he refused vehemently. "I will not have one," he cried, in a choked voice, "he will poison me, or let me bleed to death, or give me up to my enemies." It was impossible to pacify him, he only cried out more excitedly that he was surrounded by enemies, and wished to be alone. When his wish was complied with, he called out for help—to be defended from the assailants whom he saw in his fevered fancies. The watchers were in despair, and sent for one of the deaconesses. In the early Church, as is well known the care of the sick was an essential duty of the deacons; and for the same work of mercy, deaconesses, too were appointed—pious widows, who took a vow of continence to the bishop, thus raising an

impassable barrier between themselves and the world, and enabling them to devote themselves wholly to their Lord, in these his suffering members. They had to attend to the poor and sick, widows and orphans, female catechumens and converts, in their different wants; a wide field of labour, and one requiring great patience, prudence, and charity. Into their homes, which in many instances were palaces, they generally received widows and orphan girls, besides many to whom the service of Christian charity seemed sweeter than that of the world. Pentadia had, since her husband's death, formed one of this holy band; and now for more than a year she had devoted herself and her large fortune exclusively to her vocation. Every one thought of her first whenever help was needed. When she heard who wanted her, her lips quivered for a moment; then, with a companion, she took her way to Sta. Sophia. In those days churches were not isolated buildings, standing alone in a square; they were always built with a large porch, surrounded by a colonnade, sometimes by two, into which the houses of the clergy opened, to which adjoined the *hospice*—as we should now say—for pilgrims and travellers, sometimes a hospital for the sick, and, at a rather a later date, schools. The whole of this block of buildings was included under the title of Sta. Sophia, or whatever name the church happened to bear. The right of sanctuary made a room for the fugitive necessary, and to the one inhabited by the disgraced consul Pentadia now bent her steps. As she entered it, he raised himself into a sitting posture, and gazed at her fixedly. Then grasping the arm of the youth who was watching beside him,

he gasped out, “Now I am lost ! she is come to give me to my enemies.”

“You are ill in body and mind, Eutropius,” said Pentadia gently, “otherwise you could not fear a deaconess who is come to offer you her services.”

“Are you not the noble Pentadia ?”

“That is my name ; but the question is not anything about me, but that you should take proper means for your recovery. You are perfectly safe ; no one dreams of giving you up : so leave off crying out and agitating yourself—that will be in itself a good step in the right way.”

“I *cannot* trust you,” answered Eutropius, “for you must hate me, and you speak gently to quiet my suspicions, and then, when I am asleep, you will deliver me to the Prætorians. I know what human nature is, and what to expect from it.”

Pentadia looked at him silently and compassionately, as she thought how impossible it was for one who had no trust in God to trust his fellow creatures.

“You cannot deny it, you see !” cried Eutropius.

“I will not dispute with you,” she answered, “it would only excite you and do you harm.”

Her companion now offered him a draught which she had been preparing, but he eyed her distrustfully, saying, “Perhaps it is poison !” Her answer was to taste it. “Oh, that is nothing,” he cried, “the poison may be at the bottom of the cup, and you have only just touched it with your lips.”

“Miserable man !” exclaimed the young girl, “do you really think we want to murder you ?”

“Do you not know,” he answered, “that I sent

Timasius into exile ; that his only son followed him voluntarily, and that they both died there miserably ? Do you not know that I persecuted Pantadia, because I feared she would go to Timasius and take her fortune with her ?”

“ I know it all ; but do not *you* know that Pentadia is a Christian ?”

“ Oh, we are all Christians ; but that makes no difference,” he answered carelessly. “ We have all our inclinations, which we follow much in the same way—Catholics, Arians, and Pagans. I became consul and patrician by following mine ; Eudoxia and Gainas follow theirs in ruining me : why should not revenge drive Pentadia to poison me !”

By a slight gesture, Pentadia imposed silence on the indignant girl, saying herself to Eutropius, “ You seem to be quieter now, for you speak connectedly ; now you know that it is important for you to keep calm and rational, and, as I do not see of what use we can be to you, we will leave you for the present.”

After they were gone, Eutropius said to his attendant, “ You saw how offended she was when I suspected her of revengeful feelings ?”

“ No,” he answered, “ I only wondered at her patience under your insults. Fancy imagining Pentadia a poisoner !”

“ If you were in my place, with your brain bewildered by such a flight, such a peril, such a glimpse of the face of death, you would understand that no thoughts are too wild to enter the mind.”

“ And have you thought at all of God, and your poor soul ?”

“ My soul, indeed !” sneered Eutropius. “ I have enough to do with thinking how to save my life—my soul must take its chance.”

After a while he expressed a wish to be left alone, which was complied with ; and in silence and solitude all sorts of thoughts and fears and fancies chased each other through his mind. True, he thought, he was safe for the time in the Church’s shelter, but he did not feel safe enough, and longed to be far away in a quiet island, or the crowded solitude of some great city. “ Here,” he said to himself, “ I am in prison, and the best prospect before me is banishment—whither ? And who knows that it may not be a mere pretext, and that when I am taken out of the way, they will torture me to death ? What if I left this place secretly ? No one would ever suspect a hunted man of quitting sanctuary—ten to one my flight would be quietly accomplished. I cannot endure this silence, this loneliness ; as little can I endure the people around me, with their high-flown superstitious talk. This wretched room, too, with its mean furniture ! Shall I loose all my wealth, and languish away my days in poverty ? Never ! I will go—but whither ? First to Osius, he will provide a boat, and I can cross the Bosphorus by night to Chalcedon. I can rely on him : yes, I will go. And here lies a respectable dark-coloured garment which they have left for me. Capital ! I shall be taken for a monk. How oppressive this silence is ! Treachery may lurk here : and why should this Patriarch defend me against the Emperor ? Only to curry favour with the people by maintaining the right of sanctuary, and to cow Arcadius by a display of

priestly authority. After a while he will give me up to please him, and to pacify Eudoxia and Gainas. That is it—oh, I can see through him: I know what the magnanimity of men is worth! But suppose Osius betrays me—no, he will not do that! He cannot be accused of magnanimity, certainly; but he owes everything to me, and will be faithful. I will venture."

He put on the dress which had been brought instead of his disguise, took some food, to the great satisfaction of his good-natured attendant, whom he actually thanked for his kindness, and saying he felt better, and hoped to sleep well, he dismissed him. But the nearer night approached, the more restless and anxious Eutropius became. Now he determined on flight: but then, "Had he not better wait quietly, as Pentadia had done, to see what fate had in store for him? No!—she had powerful friends pleading her cause at court; and he had only bitter enemies. And women have more patience and submission. But I—. This inaction will be the death of me—I must do something; I will brave the danger and go."

So the night came; and without trust in God, without one good resolution, without one feeling higher than the instinct which teaches the fox to fly from the hounds, the wretched Eutropius slunk away. The great square was nearly empty, one or two stragglers were crossing it—that was all. It would not do to hurry too much, so he calmed his wild impatience, and walked at a leisurely pace towards the house of Osius. Then he thought that if the porter should not recognize him, he would inquire his business. But it would not do to reflect; he must run.

the risk now. He reached Osius's house safely ; the porter inquired who he was, but Eutropius glided dexterously past him, leaving the man looking in surprise after the intruder, who knew his way so well that he never asked which way he should go to find the master of the house. All seemed strangely quiet ; evidently Osius was not entertaining guests. So far, well ; the servants were doubtless in bed. Undisturbed, and only hindered by having to grope in the dark, Eutropius reached, and entered his friend's room.

“ What do you want here ? ” he cried in a hoarse whisper ; “ I cannot protect you—hence ! away ! ”

“ Yes,” said the unhappy Eutropius, “ that is what I wish to do ; but you must help me.”

“ I cannot , I have to fly myself, otherwise I shall be robbed of my property : and all because I have been your follower. Away with you, then ! I have no time to waste. I have sent away all my servants, because I will not have prying eyes upon me,” cried Osius. “ I embark this very night ; I cannot be plagued with other people's concerns ! ”

“ Oh, take me with you ! let me be your servant—only save me ! All that you possess, you owe to me ; will you not save my life—only my life in return ? ”

“ Impossible ! you would be recognized, and we should both be ruined then. Go back to sanctuary; you are safe there.”

“ I cannot stay there ! ” replied the despairing wretch ; “ treachery lurks there—death stares me in the face. Oh, take me with you ; let me pass for your servant—let

me be your servant—only be merciful, and take me with you !”

“ I tell you again, I cannot : the master of the vessel will not let you go ; you cannot pay for your voyage to Thessalonica, much less to Hispalis ! It is a Spanish vessel ; I am going to my own country.”

“ In the name of heaven, pay for me !” moaned Eutropius. “ In Spain, where no one knows me, in a large place like Hispalis, I should be safe ; and I will serve you as your slave all my life—only take me.”

“ That might be all very well, if you were twenty years old ; as it is, the idea is absurd.”

“ Then do, for once, a work of pure mercy, and grant my prayer.” And he fell down before Osius, and embraced his knees.

“ Away with you—back to your sanctuary ! You are robbing me of precious moments—go !”

“ What footsteps are those ?” cried Eutropius, starting to his feet.

“ Those of the men come to take my things on board. You see, time presses—leave me !”

The porter entered, and said to Osius, pointing to Eutropius, “ Your flight and your ruin are owing to this man. I recognised him, and have summoned the guard ? here is the centurion.”

With a stifled cry of despair, Eutropius sank senseless on the floor. The centurion entered with the soldiers. “ Drag him out !” he said : then turning to Osius, “ and you will go with him. All the creatures of this miserable man who have amassed fortunes by illegal means are deprived of them, and banished like

him." Two Prætorians came forward, and each took an arm of Osius. The rest filled the trunks with everything they could find of value, searched all the rooms for more, and finally left the house with their prisoners and their booty.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## COURT LADIES.

We must pass over four years—a wide gap in this short life of ours. In these four years all had advanced on their own way towards their own ends. Clearly and sharply defined, and separated from each other, lay the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of God. Eudoxia, Augusta, and Empress of the East, was queen of the one ; Olympias, the deaconess, of the other. There was the same marked division in the priesthood. Constantinople, with its brilliant court, its pride and luxury, its cabals and intrigues for obtaining favour, influence, office, and all the thousand and one aims of wordly ambition ; this great, splendid, degraded city, was a soil in which low passions and vicious tendencies took root and thrrove abundantly. Very few, comparatively, were uninfected by the moral leprosy which spread so fast and so far. The Patriarch Chrysostom knew that the only way was to keep steadily out of the sphere of these influences. Unless summoned to the palace, or when his office, or some business, obliged him to do so, he never came to court, preferring to be called harsh and unsociable to entering the enervating atmosphere of sybaritic luxury. A portion of the clergy were faithfully devoted to him, and

followed his example ; another portion walked in other ways, and regarded him with ill-concealed hostility. There were several bishops also, who were in Constantinople on their private business, or that of the Church, who came as friends to see him. They were dazzled, too, by the splendour of the position of Patriarch in the imperial city—the very thing for which Chrysostom cared nothing ; and more than one of them entertained hopes of filling it one day, by the help of powerful friends and advocates at court. It was in their favour, too, that Eudoxia had little affection for the Patriarch. Her pride and love of rule had developed rapidly in these four years, and his humility and self-denial were a living rebuke to her. She feared him, too : partly because he was strong in the boundless attachment of the people, partly because he did not hesitate, on fitting occasions, to speak plainly to the rich and great, even to the Augusta herself ; and because she feared him, she treated him with much external respect. Now and then, too, she had fits of piety ; but, capricious and self-willed, she passed, under the influence of the moment, from one extreme to another, and there were times when no one dared so much as to mention the Patriarch's name before her.

Just now she was especially indignant with him ; and not she only, but all the fashionable ladies of Constantinople. Some of them, with whom she was on terms of great intimacy, were with her, and the pretty Thais, who was a great favourite with the Empress, principally because she outdid the rest in luxury and extravagance, had just said, “If I were Augusta, I would impose perpetual silence on the Golden-mouth ; it would be a salutary penance.”

“One cannot always do as one would wish,” answered Eudoxia.

“So indelicate—meddling with womens’ dress!” said Eugraphia, contemptuously; “it is not within the province of a Patriarch. If he were really as holy as he appears, he would know no more than a blind man about the fashion of our clothes.”

“It is degrading the cathedral,” put in the haughty Marsa, “to preach on such subjects within its walls, where only lofty and grand topics should be discussed, such as the mysteries of our holy religion, or the errors of sects and heresies. *Then* he is worth hearing: I give him his due. And he can preach splendidly—I grant that. But let him keep to doctrine, and leave our daily life to us; splendour and expense are necessities in our position.”

“And just consider,” added Eudoxia, “what would be the result of these austere views: simply, the ruin of trade and art. We are their supporters, we help thousands by thus employing them. Is that waste of money? It is just a wise and proper application of it. There are many different ways of spending it so as to do good to as many persons as possible; one builds palaces, another churches, one gives large alms, another takes care that tradesmen and jewel-merchants may find purchasers for their rich stuffs and diamonds. I can do all these things; but you cannot, and so the best way is to choose what is easiest, and what is most naturally interesting to a woman.”

“If I am not mistaken,” said a quiet voice, “what the Patriarch principally blamed was the impropriety of the present style of dress, and the vanity which makes of the body an idol to deck with gewgaws”

“Ah, Gunilda,” cried the Empress, “did you hear the Patriarch’s sermon?”

“Yes,” she answered; “I go to Sta. Sophia sometimes, by your wish; and I feel just the reverse of what Marsa says. His doctrinal discourses do not interest me; but when he takes practical subjects I admire him.”

“Gunilda has, of course, different ideas from ours, in consequence of her Gothic birth,” said Thais, compassionately.

Marsa took her up sharply: “she has a different faith, for she is not yet baptised.”

“You are both right,” answered Gunilda: “but neither of these facts prevents me from admiring a man who has the courage to lay his finger on the wounds of the age, even when they are found in high places. He pointed out the connection of all these vanities with that thirst for gold, pleasure, and luxury, which is the aim of the world.”

“Then he was very unjust,” cried Marsa, “for we have many very serious pursuits.”

“I should think so!” said Eudoxia, whose eyes began to flash angrily; “I know I require rest and relaxation after hundreds of serious and difficult occupations. That, I suppose, is making pleasure one’s aim.”

“Noble Augusta,” returned Gunilda, calmly, “the Patriarch merely pointed out a tendency; he alluded to no individuals; and I only repeat what he said.”

“I dare say he would like to turn us all into ascetics, and shut us up in a cell in some desert or other,” said Thais, in an outraged tone of voice.

“He might, perhaps, venture to try such an experi-

ment on you," remarked Eugraphia, who had a very mean opinion of the beauty's understanding.

"The Patriarch does good to no one, and a great deal of harm to himself, by this way of preaching," said the Empress. "A man in his position ought to attract and win people, even if they are not so perfect as he in his pious zeal may desire; this unbending severity repels people."

"What a difference," added Marsa, "between his way of preaching and Severian's!"

"Ah, Severian!" exclaimed the ladies, in chorus.

"If the Bishop of Gabala could only have got rid of his Syrian accent," remarked Thais, solemnly, "he would have been the first preacher of all past and future centuries. But there is nothing perfect in this world."

"At all events," said Eudoxia, "Severian was a man one could understand, whose advice one could ask; one was not always coming into collision with principles which may be suitable for a few isolated individuals, but which are impracticable in important and complicated affairs."

"Chrysostom has a high standard, certainly," said Gunilda.

"He has exaggerated ideas, and monstrous pretensions," cried Marsa; "look at his treatment of the younger clergy!"

"In that particular," Eudoxia interrupted her, "I approve of his conduct. There are strict rules, and whoever transgresses them is justly punished. Sinful, and even careless priests, are the occasion of untold mischief; they cause the mass of the people to lose rever-

ence for religion and the Church. *That* is his province —to watch over and rule his clergy with firm discipline ; but let him leave our toilettes alone.”

“ It is all of a piece in him,” answered Marsa ; love of power is his ruling passion. If he cannot govern kingdoms, he will govern souls, from Cæsar Augustus to the poorest monk in his cell. Of course it is well to hinder breaches of discipline ; but if such occur, he should be indulgent.”

“ I quite differ from you there,” cried Eudoxia.

“ A priest is but a man,” said Eugraphia, as pathetically as if she were enunciating a truth that had hitherto been undiscovered.

“ The very reason why he should be punished like other men. It shows great wisdom in the Patriarch to undertake the chastisement of the offender whom the secular arm cannot reach. I deeply regret that your nephew, Eugraphia, and your *protege*, Marsa, affords a case in point ; but I cannot help saying that the Patriarch is right.”

“ I should have thought that such a talented young man as Eugenius would have been an ornament to the Church,” said Eugraphia, in a tone of pique.

“ Doubtless, if he had been willing to amend his ways ; but he was not. He defied the Patriarch, and then slandered him. No, my good Eugraphia, the less we say of your unhappy nephew the better. He is a disciple of the Patriarch Nectarius, who had more of the Roman senator than the bishop about him.”

“ And does the generous Augusta see no excuse for Eugenius in that circumstance ?”

“Certainly—an excuse ; but neither a justification nor a proof of his vocation. The patriarch has done his duty towards him.”

“And now he asserts that he has a duty to discharge towards us,” said Marsa. “You heard him, Gunilda ; you can bear witness to the fact. He wants to set us rules, as well as his clergy, only on a different subject.”

“He said,” answered Gunilda, “that he should have to answer to God for the souls of men and women, young and old, rich and poor, gentle and simple, and that this responsibility compels him to hold up a mirror before every offender, by admonition, reproof, or denunciation, that he may see his errors, and amend them.”

“Such ideas are outrageous!” cried Marsa. “It is quite another thing preaching against the failings of the poor and obscure, for their numbers prevent any one from fixing on individuals as aimed at ; but people of high rank are comparatively few—their affairs, their tastes, their occupations, are generally known, and if *they* are made the subjects of animadversion in a sermon, individuals are soon fixed upon to whom such a remark seems applicable. I am certain that at this moment all Constantinople is saying, ‘At last the Augusta and the ladies of her court have heard the truth about their dress and their extravagance.’ ”

“Oh, most noble Augusta,” cried Thais, “you will not endure this?—you will avenge your dignity, and let this audacious Patriarch be sharply reprimanded ?”

“My dear Thais,” said the Empress, rather impatiently, “you ought to know better than to suppose that the Patriarch of Constantinople can be treated like an

ordinary offender. Besides—what would be the use? He would only talk of his conscience and his duty, and go on preaching just the same."

"Do you mean to put up with it all quietly, then?" asked the wondering Thais.

"We must go to work differently," answered Eudoxia. "Now, let us change the subject."

Before many minutes had passed, the Emperor was announced, and Eudoxia dismissed her ladies. The Empress knew in a moment, by the mingling of vexation and embarrassment which his face expressed, that the cause of his annoyance, whatever it might be, concerned her.

"You look troubled, my dear lord," she said, gently; "how good of you to come and share your grief with me."

"My trouble related to you, Eudoxia," he answered.

"To me!" she cried, gaily. "Come, it is all right then; for, whatever it may be, I will alter anything that displeases you."

"Nothing in you displeases me, dearest," said Arcadius; "you are the light of my eyes and the joy of my heart: but I have had letters from Rome, from my brother. He has had a grand triumphal entry there, to please the people, who dislike the court being moved from Milan to Ravenna."

"Well, what does that matter? I do not grudge the Emperor of the West these sham triumphs, because I rejoice in your having real ones."

"He is less generous to you—he *does* grudge you your honours."

“In what way?” she asked, and her proud, beautiful face flushed quickly.

“You know that it has never been usual to send the statues of the Empresses into the provinces with the same solemnity as those of the Emperors. Of course, more than one city has had the statue of an Empress erected—my mother’s was at Antioch; but I speak of their being sent as a present, and solemnly received by the principal persons of the place, and of the shows and public rejoicings on the occasion: all this has hitherto been the Emperor’s privilege. I have made an exception in your case, for your mind and character are lofty enough to merit imperial honours, and it is, besides, my delight to share everything with you. My brother disapproves of this. He says it is unwise to allow any woman to overstep the gulf which divides a Cæsar Augustus from the rest of the world; that people would look upon it as a humiliation to the Empire; that ambitious women would presume on it, and as a privilege cannot be granted to one Empress and refused to others, he says that all future Empresses of both East and West would claim your case as a precedent. You can guess how this vexes me.”

“Allow me to say, my dear lord, that you are wrong there,” said Eudoxia, smiling.

“To wound you, is to strike me,” answered Arcadius.

“That depends on the hand that gives the blow,” she returned. “Honorius wrote the words, but they were dictated by Stilicho—or Serena.”

“Do you think so?” said Arcadius, quite ready to adopt her view of the question.

“I am certain of it! Every one, unfortunately, knows that Stilicho governs the Emperor of the West; every one knows, too, that Serena, the niece of the great Theodosius, cannot forget that she has not managed somehow to attain the dignity of Augusta—that she is only the wife of Stilicho, the Vandal—and that her ambition is as great as her influence. So do not distress yourself about Honorius: he is only a tool—a name; and he is quite too weak to trouble himself about anything which reaches so far into the future—the present is quite enough for him! That letter is Stilicho’s composition, take my word for it. There would be some cause for vexation if your brother blamed you, but you cannot stoop to notice what that Vandal thinks. Forget it all, and come with me. It is a lovely evening—let us take the children on the water; that will cheer you, will it not?”

She clasped her hands round his arm, looked at him with her own winning smile, and led him out.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## A WATER PARTY.

The palace of Constantine was built on a promontory jutting out into the Propontis just where the Bosphorus empties itself into its bosom. Blooming gardens surrounded it, enclosed by thick laurel hedges; and stately planes and sycamores dipped their branches into the blue glittering sea, while, high above them, pines and cedars stretched their stiff dark boughs, contrasting vividly with the fresh soft green of the other trees. Here and there the lines of laurel were broken by flights of marble steps, ornamented with statues, and leading down to the water's edge. Hither Eudoxia had led the Emperor, and they were taking their places in a fairy-like skiff which awaited them. It was provided with carpets and cushions of bright soft colours, and a broad canopy of white silk, supported on gilded poles, was stretched over the raised seats at the stern. The Emperor and Empress sat there: she had her youngest child, Marina, on her lap, and the four others sat at her feet. She looked wonderfully lovely—her face was radiant with beauty and happiness. So Arcadius thought; and he forgot all his cares and difficulties as he sat beside her,

and the white-robed rowers made the light vessel fly like some great snowy-winged water-bird over the waves with the strong regular strokes of their oars. The ladies and gentlemen of the court followed in other boats, Amantius among the number. He had risen higher and higher in Eudoxia's favour, and now held the post of Chief, or, as we should say, Lord Chamberlain. She had a very great esteem for him, and, perhaps, she admired his disinterestedness, his straightforward simplicity, his perfect sincerity all the more, because she was quick-sighted enough to perceive that these were the qualities in which most of those around her were deficient. They had, however, one quality which was entirely wanting in him, and which she prized very highly—the power of flattering. Eudoxia revelled in the incense which was offered to her so plentifully ; she so thirsted for it, that when anyone failed to bring it, she was offended. Amantius was the only exception ; indeed, if she was in a very good humour, she would bear remarks from him that no one else—except, perhaps, Gunilda—dared venture upon.

Eudoxia not only liked and esteemed the Gothic maiden, but she was a little in awe of her character—unbending, even obstinate as it was, but thoroughly true and genuine. Her life seemed to the Empress like a firm straight line among all the crooked turnings and twistings of her own, and of that of the rest, and she looked at it with a curious mixture of wonder and respect. Then to strengthen her feeling for Gunilda, came her strong wish for her conversion from Arianism, and her kind sympathy with the girl in her sad position. And it was a very sad

one now : Gainas had not been contented with the disgrace and banishment of Eutropius ; he pressed for his death, and forced Arcadius to consent to it by his importunate audacity. But it was out of his power to succeed his fallen enemy in the post of favourite—that was occupied by Eudoxia. Then his ambition took a higher flight : the imperial purple seemed its only worthy object. He revolted with the army, of which he was general-in-chief, in Bithynia ; but the rebellion was put down, Gainas fled into Moesia, fell into the hands of the Huns, and was slain by them. His head was sent to Constantinople, and received by the people with shouts of rejoicing : they remembered that he and his Goths had once sacked their city. Poor Gunilda suffered agonies—her father had been her idol. To be a Goth, and to be honourable, were identical in her ideas. This feeling made her cling passionately to her people and their faith ; Arianism must be true, for it was the religion of the Goths. So she longed inexpressibly for the scenes of her childhood, the wooded banks of the rushing Danube, to find there, among her countrymen, the realization of all the visions which floated vaguely before her yearning soul.

Her father's rebellion was a rude awakening from her dreams of Gothic perfection. She had so often answered, when Greeks and Romans spoke slightly of "barbarians." "It was a barbarian who secured the throne of the East to the son of Theodosius, when Rufinus aimed at it ; and who freed the Emperor and the empire from the unworthy Eutropius." But now that her father had proved a traitor, his humiliated daughter lamented his

crime more than his death. She was forced to own now, that a Goth could yield to the same temptations as a Greek, and that neither the Arian faith nor Gothic blood could save him from a terrible fall ; and in silent despair, she asked herself, “What can I love—what can I reverence now ?” Poor child, she no longer wished to return to her country ; on the contrary, all she desired was to remain with the Empress, and to make up by her devoted service for the treachery of her father. But she was very lonely at the court ; she had nothing in common with those around her, and she found nothing to hold by and cling to as a support for her soul, so she lived in an isolation which weighed on her young heart sometimes heavily enough. Eudoxia often told Gunilda that Arianism was a false doctrine, which could never satisfy her soul. Formerly, the Gothic girl had answered boldly that it was the only true one : she did not say that now, she only said that Arianism and Catholicism were both good if their followers led good lives. Her dislike to the Patriarch was an additional barrier between herself and the Church. Her father had once asked leave of Arcadius for the Arians to have a church within the walls of Constantinople, and the Emperor would have yielded but for Chrysostom, who boldly told him that, by a law of Theodosius, all sects had been forbidden to hold meetings in the towns, and that he could not make an exception in favour of the Arians. Gunilda had tried to persuade herself that her father’s rebellion was in consequence of this refusal, but she was too true to succeed in believing a false excuse. Still, her prejudice against the Patriarch remained, though she never joined in the attacks upon

him which were too often made in presence of the Empress.

She was, on this occasion, in the same boat with Amantius, who pitied the desolate young creature intensely, though he rarely had an opportunity of conversing with her. He asked her now, "Noble Gunilda, are you going to make this pilgrimage with us?"

"Not unless the Augusta commands my presence," she replied, "and I hope she will not, as there will, doubtless, be plenty who are anxious to go. But I have something to ask you: do you know the teaching of the Academic philosophy, that there is no doctrine which it is impossible to disprove?"

"I cannot deny it," he answered with a smile.

"And does it not commend itself to you?" she went on to ask.

"I believe it is true as regards philosophical problems and sophistical axioms; but as I do not concern myself with such questions, I have not considered the pros and cons of the matter."

"I thought that the knowledge of the truth was *the* thing in your opinion."

"Yes," said Amantius, "but absolute truth is in another sphere, and doubts can only have to do with it in the way of proving its infallibility."

"Then the Academic doctrine does not commend itself to you?"

"Nor to you, I should think, noble Gunilda. The soul craves for certainty. It may be in a state of doubt, as a traveller may find himself on a bridge which crosses a precipice—but it will not remain in such a state."

“ Better so, than to find at any step that one has been trusting to illusions !” she answered.

“ Is not that cowardly ? Life is a succession of such discoveries.”

“ Oh, that is so sad and terrible !” cried Gunilda, covering her face with both hands to hide the tears in her eyes.

“ Not if we look at it rightly,” said Amantius. “ Illusions are fetters to our feet and bandages over our eyes, which prevent our seeing and following the truth. How can it be sad, when they are broken ?”

“ You speak as if you had never seen the fall of a cherished ideal,” cried Gunilda.

“ If our ideals are in accordance with eternal truth,” returned Amantius, “ they do not fall. If they do, then they were illusions—dreams——”

“ Which one has loved !” she interrupted, with a ring of pain in her voice.

“ We love all sorts of things,” he said, “ when we do not know what we ought to love.”

“ And no one appears to know that—judging by the kind of things on which people set their hearts,” she answered, impatiently.

“ That is quite true,” said Amantius, quietly.

It was a glorious evening. All nature was pervaded by the breath and light of the sweet eastern spring. The shores of the Propontis rose bright and glowing from the blue mirror of the waters. The stately city lay before them, like the splendid sultana of some eastern tale, bathing her white feet in the sea, and the snowy peak of Olympus gleamed with an unearthly beauty against the

tender rose-colour of the evening sky. But no one seemed to feel the pathetic loveliness of the scene ; light laughter—empty talk—went on incessantly.

“ You are the only silent one,” said a young maid of honour, turning round to lay her hand on Gunilda’s shoulder. “ Now, tell us what you are thinking about.”

“ I was thinking,” answered Gunilda, “ that I should like to know what one ought to love.”

“ What one ought to love ! oh, so many things !—beauty, and goodness, and one’s friends ; one’s enemies too, the Gospel says.” So a dozen voices exclaimed at once ; and at last Aglae said, “ Will all that, or any of it, do for you ?”

Gunilda shook her head.

“ She is very difficult to please,” said the laughing girl ; “ and I cannot see the use of making it a matter of serious reflection what one ought to love, when it is human nature to love everything lovely.” And the ladies chattered away as before.

The signal to return had been given from the imperial skiff. As they were nearing the shore, Amantius, who had been as silent as Gunilda, turned to her, saying, “ Will you allow me to answer your question ?”

“ Why do you ask me ?” she replied.

“ Because sometimes I am unfortunate enough to vex you by what I say.”

She coloured, and said, “ Pray tell me what you were going to say.”

“ You ask, lady, what one ought to love. My answer is—the eternal charity.”

“How sweet that sounds,” she murmured, dreamily—“the eternal charity! But what is our security that such a love is not among the illusions of which you spoke?”

“The eternal truth!”

“Amantius, when one disbelieves in such a truth, one demands another security.”

“There is no other: but I can put it differently, and say that this security is given by Christ, the Son of God, who *is* the eternal charity and the eternal truth.”

“If I believe that,” she answered coldly, “I should be a Catholic, and I am, as you know, an Arian.”

“Still, noble Gunilda, I do not see why that should prevent my giving you a plain and simple answer.”

“If your faith teaches you more of this eternal charity than ours, why do you not love it more than we do?” asked Gunilda. “We see the whole world absorbed in the admiration and love of what is visible and external: how is it possible to believe that it is illuminated by the light of truth, and penetrated by the fire of charity?”

“We cannot: but all the same, truth and charity are in the world, though they can only influence those who do not close their hearts against them. Look at that house—the one before which the broad terrace juts out into the sea—a woman lives there who has been able to put the world under her feet, and to possess its goods without enjoying them—for love of the eternal charity.”

“And her name?” asked Gunilda, eagerly.

“Olympias.”

They had reached the landing-place now ; and as Eudoxia went to the palace by the side of the Emperor, she called Amantius to her, saying, "Go to the Patriarch, and ask him whether he will not soon arrange about the pilgrimage."

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE PILGRIMAGE.

Eudoxia was much given to a sort of external piety. Being very well and clearly instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, she could not help acknowledging that her whole way and manner of life were not in accordance with them ; and so, as a convenient method of quieting the pricks of conscience on this score, she threw herself into such outward works and acts of religion as commended themselves to her taste. Lavish in all things, her alms were no exception, and she gave largely to the poor, to churches, and charitable institutions. She made a great point of all Church functions being carried out as magnificently as possible ; and as the intense hatred of Theodosius to paganism was felt in an equal degree by the young Empress, she eagerly caught at every opportunity for suppressing the worship of polytheism. On the occasion of the birth of her son, she had coaxed Arcadius to give his consent to the destruction of a temple in Gaza, dedicated to the Syrian idol Maruas. Such manifestations of Christian zeal greatly incensed the pagan portion of his subjects, and not long before this, a similar event at Alexandria had caused bloodshed ; so that the Emperor was disinclined to risk the same

consequences at Gaza. But Eudoxia planned that the Bishop of Gaza should make her baby-son his intercessor in the matter ; and on the day of his baptism the child, who had been already proclaimed Cæsar, was made—by the chamberlain who carried him—to bend his tiny head in token of consent when the petition was laid on his purple mantle, and Eudoxia begged the Emperor so passionately not to refuse his son's first request, that, as usual, he could not resist her entreaty. The idol-temple fell, happily without any disturbance ; and the Empress erected on its site a magnificent church, called, in her honour, the Basilica Eudoxiana. All this show of zeal made her the idol of the Christian population, and she always took care to excite their enthusiasm by some religious ceremony whenever she suspected that she had made an unfortunate impression on them by some act of inconsistency.

Just now she was uneasy at what had been told her about the Patriarch's last sermon. How easy it would be for them to make the application in a way very unpleasant to her ! This made her very desirous of setting herself right with the Christian population of Constantinople. Chrysostom saw through the thin veil which covered the intense worldliness and vanity of Eudoxia's character. His situation with regard to her was very difficult ; he frequently had to speak to her plainly of the arbitrary injustice which marked too many of her actions ; often, in his sermons, he had to chastise faults and follies of which the Empress was the leader, and, at the same time, to keep up due respect for the Augusta in the minds of the people. He hoped, too, that in time she

would see the frivolity and worthlessness of her present life ; and, although he was not fully convinced of the purity of her motives, yet he hailed every good impulse as the possible dawn of a real and enduring amendment. Amantius delivered the message which had been entrusted to him, adding that the Empress had for some time intended making this pilgrimage, and that he was very glad that she kept in the same mind, in spite of the frivolous atmosphere in which she lived.

“ Yes, it is a great grace,” said the Patriarch. “ As things are, there are great allowances to be made for the Augusta, with her youth and excitable disposition.”

“ Did it not surprise your Holiness,” asked Amantius, with some hesitation, “ to hear of the complaints which some of the Ionian bishops are come to make ?”

“ This is the first I have heard of it,” answered Chrysostom ; “ but such a step does not surprise me, knowing, as I do, that there are many, as well in the Episcopate as among the inferior clergy, opposed to me.”

“ Euphraphia,” said Amantius, “ will never cease intriguing to get her nephew, Eugenius, taken into favour.”

“ What bishop would dare to introduce such a priest into the sanctuary of the Lord ? Let Euphraphia intrigue as she may—that will never occur !”

“ Oh, venerable father,” said Amantius, sadly, “ you do not know how the world loves to exalt what is mean, and to degrade what is noble.”

“ Barabbas was preferred to Jesus ; and that goes on, for the world is the same as then,” returned the Patriarch. “ But we do not read of the chief priest’s receiving Bar-

abbas into their number. Perhaps, too, Eugraphia may be an instrument of chastisement in God's hands. Take comfort, Amantius ; the chastisement may very likely be only for me."

"That is no comfort, my father, when others deserve it."

The Patriarch shrugged his shoulders with a quiet smile. "That is a very human view. But go and tell the Augusta that everything shall be arranged as she wishes."

Drypia was a town on the Bosphorus, about two hours' journey from Constantinople, and a church had just been completed there, which was intended to receive the relics of St. Thomas the Apostle ; and they were to be carried there solemnly by night, to avoid the heat of the sun. Towards midnight, the Patriarch went to Sta. Sophia to receive the relics ; and about the same time the Empress arrived, attended by her whole court, but without any state, and all dressed with the severest simplicity : earthly splendour was only to be admitted in order to do honour to the relics of the saint. They were placed in a rich golden casket, over which fell a veil heavy with massive embroidery. As soon as the procession began to move, Eudoxia took one corner of the veil in her hand, and thus performed the whole journey on foot. It was a glorious night ; the stars glittered like diamonds, and were mirrored in the calm waters of the Bosphorus, along whose shores the long procession wound its way slowly and solemnly, the light of the myriad lamps and torches borne by the pilgrims making it look like a huge fiery serpent gliding onward, while

chanted prayers and triumphant hymns, alternated with pauses of intense silence. Eudoxia was especially devout ; the stately function, the solemnity of the scene in which the earthly was visibly the servant of the heavenly, the glory of the night—all this touched her impassionable nature, and made her bearing recollected, and her thoughts serious. While some of her ladies were so overcome with weariness that they could hardly manage to reach Drypia, Eudoxia seemed to know no fatigue, and after a very short rest was ready to receive the Emperor, who arrived early in the morning. It had been his wish to accompany the procession, but the Empress had persuaded him to abandon the idea, as guards, halberdiers, and all the accompaniments of imperial dignity were out of character with the guileness and solemnity of a pilgrimage.

He, like Eudoxia, came without state, having, for the first time, laid aside mantle and diadem, and his body-guard bore neither lance nor shield ; all to show that he approached the relics of the apostle as an humble suppliant, and merely invoked his powerful intercession. Chrysostom rejoiced sincerely in the edifying example given by the imperial pair, and some expressions of which he made use in the discourse which he delivered after Mass, filled her with indescribable delight. He spoke of her as a second Miriam leading the armies of Israel with songs of praise, full of faith and humility. And not she only—all the assembled multitude rejoiced at this tribute to her piety. The news spread rapidly that the holy Patriarch had been saying everything that was good of their great and pious Augusta, and when she returned to Constantinople in the afternoon, with her husband, it

seemed as if the acclamations would never end which greeted her on every side.

Gunilda had not been present. The Arians, with a melancholy consistency, had no faith in the supernatural life of elect souls, which is a consequence of this great act of God's charity ; so they neither believed nor understood that veneration of the saints, which is, in fact, a homage paid to the divine love and power manifested in them. Eudoxia never forced Gunilda in these matters ; she might express a wish at times, but her attendant was always free to follow her own inclinations. On this occasion she hastened, with mingled respect and tenderness, to meet her mistress.

“ It is something beautiful,” she said, “ to see a young, lovely, idolized Empress like you, great Augusta, setting such an example to all her subjects, and edifying everyone by her piety.”

“ What—you have heard of it then ?” asked Eudoxia, with a well-pleased smile, as she sank, tired and happy, on a couch.

“ Nothing else is talked of in the palace and the city,” answered Gunilda.

“ That is all right—that is the very thing I want ?” cried Eudoxia. “ The Patriarch may say anything he likes now ; it will do no harm, for people will not forget in a hurry his calling me Miriam to-day.”

Gunilda looked at her with a bewildered expression. “ But *that* surely was not the motive of the Augusta’s devotion ; for in that case there would be no devotion in the matter.”

“ Only God can read the heart, and see the springs of

our actions," answered Eudoxia, coldly and haughtily. "An Empress and an insignificant young girl are to be judged by a different standard. The mere luxury of revelling in pious emotions is childishness. *I* put something higher before my eyes: to give a good example, to inspire the people with a due feeling of respect for the majesty of the throne—that is my first duty."

Gunilda was silent: she felt that there was a mixture of truth and falsehood in the sentiments of the Empress. Eudoxia was put out, and all the more difficult to please for the adoring homage she had just received. She dismissed Gunilda, and sent for more congenial companions.

In the ante-chamber, the Gothic maiden met Amantius and Hylas. "Were you, too, present at the farce of translating the relics?" she asked, contemptuously, and passed on without waiting for an answer.

"She is too beautiful to take offence at," said Hylas, "otherwise that way of hers would be past endurance; as it is, it suits her Pallas-Athene face."

"Does it strike you in that way?" asked Amantius. "For my part, I never see her or hear her speak without feeling the most intense pity."

"Well, that is something incomprehensible!" cried Hylas; "I should have said she was born under an unusually lucky star—a traitor's daughter, and the petted darling of an Empress!"

"That is not enough for her happiness."

"Exactly—that is the very reason why I call her Pallas-Athene, for I can only imagine a goddess aiming any higher? To an ordinary mortal, like myself, unaccustomed to the pleasures of Olympus, Gunilda seems a

very fortunate individual. Look, by way of contrast, at that poor Sylvina, the daughter of our friend Rufinus, another traitor! she just drags on a dreary existence in that lively spot, Jerusalem, with pilgrims and monks for her only companions, psalms and hymns for her only recreation: *she* is to be pitied, poor creature—but Gunilda!—”

“I should say *she* was happier and more at rest, than Gunilda, returned Amantius.”

“Then they are both ladies of very singular taste! but then it is the privilege of their sex to be capricious. We have just been sacrificed to a lady’s whim. Imagine dragging us out there!”

“Why did you go? The Augusta laid commands on no one to join the procession.”

“No; but when the whole court, and everybody who stands well with the court, went, I could only stay away at the risk of passing for an Arian, or some sort of heretic: a character abhorred by the Augusta—always excepting the fair Goth.”

“She abhors heresy in her, too,” answered Amantius; “but she has patience with her, and hope of her conversion.”

“There are three great virtues at once!” laughed Hylas; and therefore we had better say no more about whims and caprice—eh, my good Amantius? But just tell me: do you suppose the procession will cause a lasting peace? In that case, I shall be reconciled to my sacrifice.”

“My dear Hylas, what *is* lasting in this world? We can only hope and pray.”

## *Eudoxia.*

### CHAPTER XVI.

#### THE HATRED OF THE WORLD.

Of all Chrysostom's enemies the bitterest, perhaps, was Eugraphia, a lady very high in the Empress's favour. From the very first she had been prejudiced against him. Nectarius, his predecessor in the metropolitan see, had been her relation and intimate friend ; he was a brilliant though virtuous man of the world, not quite capable either of approaching or fulfilling all the duties of his sacred office : his election was a mistake of the great Theodosius, who was more at home in the choice of generals than of bishops. The deterioration of the clergy during the seventeen years' rule of Nectarius was only what might have been expected. Ambition, avarice, self-indulgence, neglect of duty, were considered no disgrace : interest and money were the means of attaining preferment.

Eugraphia had no children, and her whole affections were centred on a nephew whom she literally idolized, and whom she intended to be the inheritor of her large fortune. She shrank from the thought of Eugenius entering the army, and risking his life in a campaign against the barbarians. There was no cause for her alarm. The

effeminate weak nurture which she had given him effectually prevented the development of any warlike tastes, and he yielded willingly enough to her wish that he should enter the priesthood, in order, as she in her ambitious dreams hoped, to be one day or other, the successor, though hardly the immediate successor, of his uncle Nectarius. Naturally, Euphemia was violently opposed to the election of Chrysostom. The man whom, before all others, she desired to see chosen as the successor, of her friend was Theophilus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, and she formed a powerful cabal to bring this about. But Eutropius was then in the zenith of his power, and he had taken it into his head to please the people in a way that would cost him nothing, by procuring the election of the holy priest of Antioch whose virtues were always in their mouths. Thenceforth Euphemia treated Chrysostom as a creature of the detested favourite. It was not long before events occurred which inflamed her hatred still more. Eugenius was now a priest: but his manner of life was unchanged. Chrysostom, who was full of pity and indulgence for young men who had been so unfortunate as to have received holy orders in a time of relaxed discipline, spoke to Eugenius with flattering kindness, and sought by all means in his power to influence him for good; but, when all his remonstrances proved ineffectual, he told him very plainly, that the exercise of sacerdotal functions by a priest of his sentiments and morals would be no less than sacrilege. Eugenius replied insolently that he really set very little value on such functions, that his object had always been the Episcopal dignity, and that as soon as there was a

vacant see, he had little doubt of obtaining it. Very sorrowfully and very decidedly Chrysostom replied that this would never happen within the circle of his authority, and Eugenius and his aunt considered this in the light of a deadly insult. One day, the Patriarch met her in the ante-chamber of the Empress. He greeted her courteously, and begged her to use all her influence with her nephew to induce him to change his life: he might very likely pay more attention to her entreaties than to his: and before parting from her he expressed the hope that the noble Euphemia would give him the powerful help of her example in checking the growing extravagance and impropriety of dress among the ladies of Constantinople.

If the Patriarch had thought to gratify her by hinting that she gave the tone to fashionable society, he certainly failed in his object: she was extremely offended at his presuming to offer his advice, and replied coldly that she did not feel called upon to undertake the part he suggested. It was not towards the inferior clergy only that Chrysostom exercised, when necessary, a salutary severity. During a visitation which he was making in Ionia, such bitter complaints were made to him of the oppression and injustice of certain bishops who had obtained their sees by simony, that he investigated the matter, and the result was the suspension of the bishops. This, again brought fresh enemies upon him.

Every one knew who really ruled the Empire of the East, and that the first step to success in any enterprise was to gain the support of the Augusta. Still, on one point she had always firmly defended the Patriarch, namely, his manner of dealing with the clergy. No

matter how loud the outcry was against him : no matter how bitterly Marsa and Euphraphia complained—Eudoxia stood firm. She was too clever not to see that an irregular priesthood would bring religion into contempt in the eyes of the people: and that respect for the throne would not outlive reverence for the Church.

The Patriarch requested an audience : Eudoxia never doubted that its object was to thank her for the part she had taken in the pilgrimage, and she received him with her most winning grace, expressing her pleasure that his health had not suffered from the exertions of the day.

“God gives strength to do what is for His honour,” answered Chrysostom : “and you know He asks harder things of us than bodily exertion.”

“I quite agree with your Holiness : the fulfilment of high duties, the undertaking of great responsibility is far, far harder.”

“And it is just one of those hard duties,” replied the Patriarch, “which brings me now to the illustrious Augusta.”

“How can that be, venerable Father?” she said graciously : “you may be quite sure that I am only too glad to meet your pious wishes.”

“Those kind words are a great consolation, most noble lady : for I come to appeal to your justice on behalf of a greatly injured man.”

“Let me thank your Holiness beforehand for doing so : for what purpose are there earthly rulers, except to do justice and to show mercy ?”

“Lady, my heart blesses you for those words : let me lay the case briefly before you. The tribune Nicator is

accused by the Proconsul of Cilicia of a treasonable correspondence with the robber hordes of the Isaurians.

He is said to have promised them, in return for a vast bribe, to leave the mountain passes of Cilicia undefended. Upon this charge—unproved and uninvestigated—Nicator has been deprived of his office, imprisoned, his property confiscated ; and now, though innocent, he is threatened with banishment.”

“You have been wrongly informed, venerable Father,” Eudoxia interrupted, with ill-repressed anger. “Nicator’s case has been inquired into, and he has been found guilty.”

“Inquired into by his accusers ! found guilty by his accusers ! and, I will add, robbed by his accusers. That, most illustrious Augusta, is the true statement of Nicator’s case,” said the Patriarch quietly and firmly.

“Again, venerable Father, you are wrongly informed!” cried Eudoxia, with offended pride. “It was not the Proconsul of Cilicia who confiscated the property of this Nicator ; it was I who did it. I did it—I, the Augusta ! and it belongs simply to the imperial treasury.”

“Judging from the report of the Proconsul,” returned Chrysostom, with gentle dignity, “the Augusta could not perhaps have acted differently. But justice demands that the proceedings of the Proconsul be investigated—and not justice alone, but the name of our Empress, on which not the slightest stain must be allowed to rest.”

An angry flush kindled in Eudoxia’s cheek, and was then succeeded by the paleness of great excitement : “Your Holiness suffers your pious zeal to carry you too far,” she said with suppressed indignation ; “my name is above all disgrace.”

“And therefore, illustrious Augusta, no one must have it in his power to say that the hand of the Empress has taken the property of an innocent man.”

“He is not innocent! how often must I repeat it?” she broke out passionately. “The matter has been inquired into, and decided; the property of the offender has become mine. I must confess that I cannot understand your Holiness. I do not believe that any Empress was ever more anxious than I am to promote the pious objects of the Church. Have not vast sums been spent on beautifying the Basilica Eudoxiana, which I raised on the ruins of the idol temple? It was my thought to make the temple that enshrines the tabernacle of the true God more splendid and costly than a heathen temple ever was.”

“A thought worthy of an Empress!” said Chrysostom, kindly.

“And that,” she went on with increasing excitement, “is only *one* work. I maintain numbers of churches, and I have never refused a single request for this object. More than this, I give without stint to everything that may help in any way to promote the devotion of the people. Would the Saturday evening processions be what they are if I did not give the candles and the crucifixes for them? Your Holiness compels me to recall to your mind all these different works, from the least to the greatest, and then to ask whether it is possible to carry them on without a great expenditure? I should have thought that your Holiness would rejoice at large sums passing into my hands, considering the use I make of them.”

“I acknowledge, with joy and gratitude, all the labours of the noble Augusta for the glory of our holy faith,” answered the Patriarch; “and my prayers are daily offered to God, that He may, in His infinite mercy, requite you a thousandfold. But it cannot be pleasing to Him that generosity and mercy should be exercised at the expense of justice. Nicator’s guilt rests on the mere word of the Proconsul of Cilicia—the brother of the noble Marsa, who, as everyone knows, enjoys the Augusta’s entire confidence. How naturally a suspicion of partiality may arise here; and how important it is to show that such a suspicion is unfounded! An act of justice is just as edifying to a Christian nation as an act of mercy, perhaps more so in the way of inspiring confidence in its rulers; for justice is a virtue which benefits all—to which all have a claim: therefore, illustrious Empress, let justice be shewn by a fair investigation of Nicator’s cause; and do not shrink from restoring the money, if his innocence is proved.”

“It seems to me, venerable Father,” said Eudoxia, white with passion, “that, in addressing such reproaches to the Empress, your expressions are not far from treasonable, as they assume a secret understanding on my part with false witnesses. I request you, therefore, to retire, and I repeat that Nicator’s cause is settled.”

Silently the Patriarch withdrew, and Eudoxia was left in terrible agitation. “This is the gratitude of the haughty priest for all my sacrifices—all my good works!” she said, as she walked restlessly up and down the room, pausing every now and then to reflect. “To dare to pry into my purse! to defend a condemned criminal! to cast

suspicion on persons whom I trust ! And all for love of power: such a low motive—above all, in a priest ! Now I begin to understand the bitter complaints made of him by the clergy. If he looks into my conduct, how must he watch every step and movement of theirs, and drag every action to the bar of his judgment ! I pity them. Euphraphia has reason for her hatred—Eugenius has reason for his bitter complaints ; for he is utterly one-sided, and lets himself be led blindfold by flatteries. And then there are those Ionian bishops, whom he has suspended, and whose remonstrances I would not listen to in my mistaken reliance on his wisdom and justice ! Oh, they were right, and I did them grievous wrong ! But all that shall be atoned : it is *his* cause that shall be investigated. He is fond of inquiring into things—this Patriarch—so I hope it may be welcome to him in his own case ; but, welcome or not, it shall be done !”

## CHAPTER XVII.

## A FINE LADY'S DRESSING ROOM.

Eugraphia was at her toilette, surrounded by a bevy of attendants, slaves for the most part, for no freedwomen possessed of skill would have continued in her service. So she enfranchised those among her attendants who were awkward, sickly, or *passeees*—in other words, she doomed them to a life of poverty by not giving them the means of subsistence, without which freedom was a very doubtful benefit. In great establishments the number of slaves was immense, a single trifling act of service being assigned to each person. Thus the entire duty of one consisted in holding the silver basin in which her mistress washed her hands ; that of another—and this was a very nervous affair—in supporting the mirror during the toilette. The mirror was a large brightly polished disk of silver, which, however, only reflected a small portion of the figure, so that the attendant had to guess in what direction her mistress turned her eyes, in order instantly to give the requisite inclination to the mirror. Eugraphia's mirror-bearer had a hard time of it, for her lady was every day more dissatisfied with the truth-telling reflector for persisting in showing her as she was, not as

she wished to be ; and poor Leonilla had to suffer for this, as Eugraphia did not scruple to use now and then the detestable instrument with which the Roman ladies were in the habit of punishing mistakes or *gaucheries* at their toilettes—the long sharp-pointed golden hair-pin, a prick from which on the bare arm or neck was sharp enough.

Eugraphia was sitting on an ivory chair, among cushions of gold-coloured silk, richly embroidered. Her *coiffure* was just completed, and very cleverly too. It was impossible to say how much false hair was mixed with her own in the coronet of braids above her forehead, and in the rich coil at the back of her head. Soft rainbow-tinted opals gleamed here and there with subdued lustre among the brown tresses. She was saying in a well pleased voice : “ That will do beautifully—you have done your work to perfection, Julitta. There are no jewels like opals for this season of the year ; they are too pale or too cold for either winter or summer, though. Now, Melitta, the opal earrings—quick !”

Julitta stepped back, proud of her performance and of her mistress’ approbation, and Melitta, whose department was the care of Eugraphia’s jewels, found the desired ornaments, and placed them in the lady’s ears.

“ Zoe !” said Eugraphia, and there was a little stir among the attendants—evidently it was a critical moment. The slave who had been summoned, approached with four others, each carrying a salver on which were placed phials and boxes containing paints, brushes and sponges.

These girls were named after the colour which was assigned to them—Cyane, Melaine, Erythra, and Leuca. Zoe began her work, which required a light hand and a

practiced eye: first the white paint was laid on and lightly rubbed in with soft cotton-wool, then, still more carefully, the pink.

“ Too much pink,” said Eugraphia, whose eyes followed Zoe’s manipulations in the mirror. “ I look quite feverish—hideous! See how prominent the cheek-bones are! do you want to make me a Medusa?” Zoe winced, for she had received a sharp prick from the hair-pin on her left arm.

“ But after all,” went on the fashionable tyrant, “ I believe the fault is Leonilla’s; she is holding the mirror so that a shadow falls on it. It is intolerable! I cannot see whether the red does not go too near the ear. Awkward girl! And it is so badly polished, that I look quite grey.”

Leonilla stood motionless as a statue, only giving the mirror the turn which Eugraphia’s looks or words ordered. She, like all her companions, was too much accustomed to her mistress’ ill-humour to concern herself about it—to endure her scolding was part of their business. Now came the finishing touches to the picture, with Zoe’s brushes! Erythra’s brilliant carmine dyed the lips; Cyane’s phial supplied the faint delicate blue for veining the temples; while from Melaine’s came a jet-black, with which a single line was drawn along the inside of the eyelids, deepening the tint of eyebrows and lashes. At last, thanks to these wretched devices, which only a vain and degraded taste could consider beautifying, Eugraphia looked very much like a wax doll, with all the lovely colours of youth indeed, but without its life and charm.

All this time, another *toilette*, that of Eugraphia's lap-dog, had been going on at the other end of the room. The little creature, of a breed something like the modern Bolognese, was bathed in perfumed water, rubbed with fragrant oil, and, finally, powdered with gold-dust. The care of this dog was assigned to a certain number of slaves, and Eugraphia was very particular about the exact performance of their duties. As might be expected, her fancies for different animals were manifold, and not very long-lived ; but just at present she was devoted to the powdered lap-dog. Every now and then she looked quickly towards the other end of the room, to make sure that her pet was cared for with due tenderness.

“Eudora ! remember what a delicate creature you have charge of, and rub in the oil with a light hand ! Have you heard that the Lady Thais has had a dwarf antelope sent for from Central Africa ?”

“Is that a new kind of a dog ?” asked Eudora.

“No ; a tiny little deer, with two pointed horns. Thais has had the horns gilded, and a little circle of emeralds put round each. Certainly, it has the prettiest effect—still I cannot approve of putting jewels to such a use.”

“If it were for a dog now !” cried Eudora, enthusiastically.

“No not even for a dog !” said her mistress, in a tone of uncompromising rectitude. “What is left for a lady's ornament, if animals wear jewels ?”

“Your words are always full of wisdom, noble lady,” said Eugenia, who held a higher rank than the rest. She was superintendent of the dressing-room, and was always

present at her mistress' toilette, without taking any part in it. "Jewels certainly ought not to be worn by animals."

"And suppose I chose to put a ruby collar on my dog, what would you say then, my wise Eugenia?" asked Eugraphia, contemptuously.

"I should say," answered the poor woman, "that my noble mistress had some good reason for it."

"You are wisdom personified, Eugenia! never at a loss for an answer. But, certainly, the strangest fancy in pets is that of the Emperor of the West. Now guess, each of you, what it is. Eugenia begin!"

Eugenia suggested an elephant, and the rest all named some animal, but no one guessed right; and at last Eugraphia said, solemnly, "The favourite animals of the invincible Honorius are fowls."

The attendants did not quite know whether they were expected to laugh, to be astonished, or to be full of admiration; and the uncertainty produced a universal silence.

"There, get on with your work, Zoe; and do not you stare at me in that way, Eudora!" cried Eugraphia, impatient at the slavish manner of the poor girls. "Well Eugenia, what do you think of the imperial favourites?"

"I think it is a charmingly new and original idea," answered Eugenia, timidly.

"So I should think!" said Eugraphia. "The poultry-yard of the illustrious Honorius, at Ravenna, is said to be something charming—fitted up with elegant little hen-houses, grass-plots, and fountains; it is enclosed by a bronze lattice, and shaded by catalpas, and quite full of different rare sorts of fowls, some of them actually from India,"

“Oh, how delightful ! What a sweet idea of the illustrious Emperor Honorius ! What a little paradise of fowls !” cried the girls, in a rapture of admiration.

The portress, whose duty consisted in watching the door of the dressing-room, and preventing the approach of listeners, now went out on hearing steps. She returned while the enthusiastic exclamation in praise of the imperial poultry-yard were still going on, and said, “Narcissus inquires whether you will receive the noble Eugenius, illustrious lady ?”

“Certainly ; let him be shown into my morning-room,” answered Eugraphia, eagerly. “Now, girls, be quick ; my time is more valuable than yours ! Give me a rose-coloured dress—one of the soft Persian ones. Will not that go well with the opals, Eugenia ?”

“To perfection ! I only hope plenty of visitors may come to-day, to admire and envy your beautiful toilette.”

The dress was taken out of a sandal-wood chest ; and Eugraphia, ready at last, passed out of the room, followed by the lap-dog.

The moment she disappeared, Leonilla sank exhausted on a couch. “It is too much for any one to endure ! No one can imagine what it is to stand motionless, and holding a heavy mirror, for a couple of hours !”

“You can rest now,” said Eugenia, coldly ; “the fatigue will have passed by the evening.”

“Oh, Eugenia !” cried the girl, imploringly, “if only some other task could be given me ! if only I might change with Eudora !”

“Much obliged by the proposal, I am sure,” was Eudora’s mocking answer. “My dog never gives me

pricks, dear little creature ! I am quite satisfied, and desire no change."

"You need neither of you trouble yourselves till your tastes are consulted," said Eugenia. "If a change has to be made, it will be made, without your suggestions. At present, there is none in contemplation. Leonilla will soon be rested, and acknowledge that her post is an easy one. I can fancy persons who have to sit all day at their needle, complaining ; but really, for Leonilla to grumble !"

"I am sure they have a far easier thing of it than I," said the girl, "a thousand times easier ; for they have something to show for their labour : a dress, a piece of embroidery—something or other ; and they have some variety too : the pattern, material, cuts, are all different at different times. But look at me ! I have no change. I have just to stand for hours, like a statue with moveable eyes and hands, and that is all !"

"You forget that you have the mirror to keep bright," put in Eugenia.

"And that we have not a very lively time of it, either, with our paints !" laughed Cyane, merrily.

"Well, anyhow, we are better off than the attendants of some ladies," said Julitta. "How should you like washing and combing dirty sick people, and dressing their wounds ? or dragging baskets of food and clothing up and down, to distribute to the poor ? Those are the duties of the maids of the noble Pentadia and Olympias."

"Disgusting !" cried some of the party.

"And yet people say they do it by choice," said Leuca.

“I daresay ; much in the same way as I choose to wash the dog rather than hold the mirror,” answered Eudora.

“No, no,” cried Leuca ; “the ladies I spoke of have given all their slaves liberty, and the means of subsistence ; but some of them are so devoted to their mistresses, that they prefer remaining with them and sharing their hard life.”

“Well, all I know is, that if I had my freedom and a comfortable little income, I would wash neither dogs nor sick people. I would buy a country house, and start a poultry-yard, like the Emperor Honorius.”

“Certainly,” said Cyane, “it would require a great love for one’s mistress to live with her as the servants of Pentadia and Olympias do.”

“I think,” murmured Melitta, as she arranged the jewels in the caskets, “that what it requires is to love God above all, as they love Him.”

“That is harder still !” cried Cyane.

“Come, come,” said Eugenia, authoritatively, “there has been gossiping enough. Everyone who has finished her work here had better go.”

She was obeyed ; and those only remained who had to put the room in order under Eugenia’s supervision.

Eugraphia had only Christians in her service, and she was very particular that they should all be baptised at the usual age. The Empress Eudoxia herself had only been baptised just before her marriage. She insisted, however, on all her children being brought to the sacrament of regeneration very soon after their birth ; for, as has been said, she was thoroughly well instructed in religion, and

practised it punctually so long as it did not interfere with her inclinations. Her example told upon others, and nothing would have induced Eugraphia to admit Polytheists or heretics into her household ; but as her Christianity consisted entirely in externals, and her spirit was essentially worldly, it was just the same with her attendants. They were duly instructed and baptised, because this was required of all in Eugraphia's service—but that was the whole ; as to a life guided by the spirit of the Gospel, and founded on Christian principles, it was a thing never mentioned or thought of.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## A COUNCIL OF EVIL.

Eugenius, who was now waiting for his aunt, was a gay young man of the world, who, if his career had been chosen in accordance with his tastes, would have found his vocation in the camp or the court. Eugraphia's mistaken fondness had brought unhappiness to him, as well as scandal to the Church; as neither of them had a notion of what is involved in the priestly office, they considered the irregular life led by Eugenius as the privilege of his youth, and called those whose views were opposed to theirs, harsh and unjust. With all this, there was no malice about the young man, and the idea of revenging himself on the Patriarch would never have occurred to him: he was a tool in the hands of others. Marsa was an intimate friend of Eugraphia; but this fact by no means hindered the existence of a certain rivalry between the two. Marsa was quite tired of hearing her friend's incessant laudations of the wonderful talents of her nephew, who would infallibly be a pillar of the Church in time; and one day she informed the astonished Eugraphia that she cherished the same expectations of Florus, a very distinguished young man, the

son of one of her slaves, and that, in this hope, she was giving him a first-rate education. Florus was, in reality, a very ordinary person, but he had far more ambition than Eugenius, so that he had more knowledge, though not more love, of his profession. Eugenius wanted to enjoy the world; so did Florus, but he also wished to cut a figure in it. He struck up a close intimacy with Eugenius, and flattered him in every way, for he was shrewd enough to see that, whether his friend succeeded or not in gaining a high position in the Church, he was sure of one in the world, thanks to his high birth and brilliant prospects of fortune, and that he could not do better than make himself indispensable to this favoured individual. This devotion to her nephew was, also, a sure road to Euphraphia's good graces: an opportune circumstance for Florus, as he had been out of Marsa's ever since the Patriarch had announced his determination to refuse to admit both the friends to the communion of the faithful, till they had changed their way of life. Eugenius treated this decision with the reckless frivolity of his character; Florus brooded over the slight, as he considered it, and vowed revenge.

Euphraphia now led the way into a small apartment, into which only her special friends were admitted. As soon as they were seated, she turned eagerly to Florus, saying, "Well, how are you getting on?"

Florus made a little deferential gesture towards Eugenius, who answered in a tone of complacency, "So well, that the play can begin at once. The Ionian bishops are eagerly demanding a council."

"I know all that," said Euphraphia, impatiently; "but,

as there is no knowing what the decision of such a council would be, we cannot venture to hurry its assembling."

"Things are different now," returned Eugenius; "a new accuser of the Patriarch has appeared on the scene, and one who will, I expect, give matters the desired turn."

"And that is?"

"Theophilus, the Patriarch of Alexandria!" was the triumphant answer.

"Is this certain?" asked Euphraphia anxiously.

"Quite certain, noble lady," said Florus. "Have you forgotten those four Egyptian monks, about whose immense height everyone was talking last year?"

"No; I remember them. The Augusta thought a great deal of them and their piety. They were called the 'tall brothers.' They complained that Theophilus had driven them from their cells on some charge—I forget what—of heretical opinions."

"Exactly," returned Florus; "the Patriarch Chrysostom decided that the charge was unfounded, and asked the Patriarch Theophilus to let the old men return to their desert, and remain there unmolested. He refused; and then the old fanatics appealed to the Empress, begging, praying, and weeping. They vowed they held the true Catholic faith, and so worked upon her that she wrote to Theophilus, saying that if he considered the opinions of the 'tall brothers' heterodox, there must be something amiss with his own, and giving him the choice of desisting from his persecution of the monks, or of giving an account of himself in Constantinople."

“It is past belief, the influence which Chrysostom has over the Augusta!” cried Euphraphia. “That letter was written at his dictation!”

“She had heard complaints from all parts of Egypt, of the tyranny and avarice of Theophilus,” added Florus, with a malicious twinkle in his eye. “We live in strange times, illustrious lady! All our bishops are holy men, of course; but they do not agree very harmoniously together, and there are manifold complaints of them from priests and laymen. Well, the Patriarch of Alexandria did not alter his conduct in consequence of the Augusta’s letter.”

“It is not our place to discuss the conduct of the venerable Theophilus,” Euphraphia answered, coldly. “We are ignorant of his reasons; but every one knows his hatred of polytheism, and his zeal against the heathen temples. That would give rise to a good deal of exaggeration; and it does not do to lay too much stress on reports.”

Florus bowed obsequiously, and went on—“Business called me to Alexandria just at the time of the complaints of the Ionian bishops, and I took occasion to describe to the venerable Theophilus the dissatisfaction of the bishops, the clergy, and the court, with Chrysostom, and to represent how desirable it would be to investigate the charges against him in a council. The only thing wanted, was a man of weight and position to come forward boldly in the matter. He replied that, so long as the Augusta defended and supported the Patriarch Chrysostom on every occasion, no one would ever be found willing to play the thankless part of his opponent. Relying on

your noble sentiments, I told the Patriarch that there were some impartial and lofty minds among the Empress' intimate associates, who were unwearied in their endeavours to give her a more just idea of the character of Chrysostom ; and further, that of late he had assumed a tone, both in his public discourses and private conversation, in speaking of the Empress, that it was impossible for her to endure long. The Empress of the East must not be among the spiritual slaves of this proud Patriarch. Then Theophilus said, ‘ Well, my son, when that time comes, I shall be ready. I have already been summoned to prove my own orthodoxy at Constantinople : I will come to examine into that of another.’ This, lady, is the result of my visit to Alexandria.”

“ And a first-rate result, too !” cried Eugenius. “ At last, things begin to look promising.”

“ Of course,” continued Florus, respectfully, “ the principal thing remains to be done by you, illustrious lady : the Empress must summon the council which the deposed bishops demand.”

“ That is indispensable, certainly. I quite acknowledge it,” returned Euphraphia, no less maliciously than her fellow-conspirator. “ It is possible that the holy Patriarch Chrysostom may have allowed his zeal to carry him too far on many occasions, such as the deposition of his suffragans, his protection of suspected heretics, his tyranny towards his clergy—such things cannot be suffered by the imperial majesty, whose chief attribute is justice. There is something to be feared from the impulsive and rather changeable character of the Empress: one can never be sure of her carrying through what she

begins. But we must make the attempt. The spirit of fanaticism is endangering Christianity, and making it disliked ; and this spirit must be put down wherever it is found—all the more energetically when it is in high places. A few miserable monks, however the people may revere them as saints, are not nearly so dangerous as the Patriarch who patronises them.”

“ And this pious man meddles with everything !” exclaimed Eugenius. “ What an outcry was raised when Eutropius placed the noble Olympias under restraint !”

“ And very justly !” angrily interrupted his aunt. “ Was that miserable slave to exercise his insolence on a lady of her rank ?”

“ I don’t defend him,” said Eugenius carelessly ; “ but I want to know in what she is better off now ? The Patriarch dictates how and to whom she shall give alms. Her liberality used to know no limits : all that is altered now : she makes inquiries concerning the persons who seek help from her, and concerning the manner in which her gifts are applied, and if the result is unsatisfactory, she leaves off giving.”

“ The first sensible thing I have heard of her,” sneered Euphraphia. “ If it is owing to the Patriarch, she has cause for gratitude to him.”

“ Every one speaks of the change,” said Florus. “ It used to be said that it was impossible for the noble Olympias to refuse any one, especially if they asked alms in the name of JESUS. It is different now, as Eugenius says. I know a person who asked for help in this way, and her answer was —‘ Do not abuse the Holy Name for an unholy purpose.’ ”

“ And was she right in her suspicions ?”

“ Well, yes ! but it just shows how many spies she must employ, and she can only find them by the help of the Patriarch, who has quite a mania for meddling and interfering. There are persons to whom Olympias used to be a perennial fountain of relief, who are bitter enemies of the Patriarch, because of his directing the stream into different channels.”

“ He has enemies among the people, too, then ?” asked Euphraphia.

“ Oh, plenty ! among the dregs of them,” answered Eugenius, with unconscious *naivete*.

Florus bit his thin lips in vexation at the awkwardness of his friend, and then said—“ You are aware, noble lady, of the unmeasured language in which the Patriarch inveighs against all public spectacles, representing them as a source of lax morality, debased taste, and indifference to the true and highest interests of men—in short, of everything evil ! He is for ever preaching on the subject, and so irritating the people, who delight in the games of the circus, and occasionally miss church for them. One would suppose he might have some indulgence for what, at the worst, is a childish weakness ; but no, he is never weary of denouncing them as crying sins, and threatening them with eternal punishment.”

“ I suppose,” said Euphraphia, mockingly, “ that you regularly attend the discourses in Sta. Sophia ?”

“ Not so, lady,” answered Florus, coolly ; “ but if you have heard one sermon from the Golden-mouth, you have heard all—particularly as he is in the habit of preaching twenty or thirty times on the same subject.”

“ What a wonderful man he must be,” exclaimed

Eugenius, “to preach twenty sermons on the mischievous effects of the games of the circus ! I am certain I could not manage one.”

“Very likely not,” replied Florus, “as you do not believe in their mischievous effects.”

“Nothing but conscientious conviction brings fluency on any subject,” said Eugraphia. “One day, I hope we shall hear good sterling sermons from Eugenius, if not such wonderfully eloquent ones.” Then she continued her conversation with Florus, and went through the names of such bishops as were known to be for or against the Patriarch. The conclusion they arrived at was, that Theophilus would have to bring a goodly number from the Patriarchate of Alexandria to Constantinople, in order to make the enemies of Chrysostom equal to his devoted adherents.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

Eudoxia had taken her resolution, without consulting her ladies : she had spoken to the Emperor only. Every day strengthened her determination to be absolute in power, to own no guide but her own judgment ; therefore, the most politic course was to discuss matters with Arcadius, whose opinion was always the echo of hers. The haughty Marsa saw, with secret resentment, that Eudoxia became more and more the Empress, less and less the daughter. But she endeavoured by flattery of all kinds to remain in favour ; and as the other ladies followed her lead, knowing that Marsa was the most likely to be acquainted with the Augusta's tastes, Eudoxia became the object of a worship as idolatrous as that of heathen times, only that the incense-clouds rose round a throne instead of an altar. Amantius and Gunilda alone did not join in this adulation, and from them alone Eudoxia did not expect it. They both grieved, though from different reasons, to see the dangerous path on which, in her haughty fearlessness, she had entered. Amantius was pained, for her sake, to see how all her brilliant qualities were only a snare to herself and others ; Gunilda, because

she was conscious of a growing estrangement from her mistress—and if this went on, then, whom had she left to respect or to love? She had seen more of Amantius lately: she could not divest herself of a feeling of confidence in him—and in him alone at the court—and this, although she knew how earnestly he desired her conversion to Christianity, and although she was determined to remain an Arian. But her mind sought for one in which both sincerity and conscientiousness met: and she found this in Amantius. This pleased Eudoxia greatly. She hoped everything from his influence with Gunilda; and she expressed this hope in a conversation with him: “Only you must not scare her by too high-flown sentiments,” she added.

“I should have thought her a person to be attracted, not frightened, by lofty aims,” replied Amantius.

“Yes,” said the Empress, smiling; “she admires them as long as they do not arise from Christian principles. There are two spirits in her, and the strife between the two is making the poor girl miserable. Her soul is yearning for the Truth, and her self-will sets her against it. You will be patient and forbearing with her, will you not? I feel that she is a sacred charge to me, in spite of her father’s treason—and he atoned for it by his death. I can never forget that he twice freed my imperial husband from the dominion of an unworthy favourite.”

“You are magnanimous, great Augusta,” said Amantius.

“I so seldom hear a word of praise from you,” said Eudoxia graciously, “that I accept that as a high compliment.”

“ You know, most Illustrious,” answered Amantius, respectfully, “ that such a thing is simply impossible. Equals may praise one another, and a superior may praise an inferior ; but when it is the other way, it degenerates into flattery.”

“ And yet that other way is pretty much in vogue.”

“ Yes, lady, many wrong things are in vogue in this crooked world,” was the quiet answer.

“ Granted ; only, you see, imperfect human nature likes many of the things which you call wrong, and misses them when they are absent.”

“ Should not that fact be a spur on the road to perfection ? Is not regenerate human nature too noble a thing to dwell contentedly in an atmosphere where such a feeling is possible ?”

“ There !” said Eudoxia, “ what heights are you soaring to ! Take Gunilda up with you. I cannot say how glad I should be.” She could see the two contending spirits in Gunilda—not in herself.

When Euphraphia, after many little preliminaries, ventured to touch upon the question of summoning the council, she was not a little surprised to hear that the Emperor had already assented to it.

“ How rejoiced the venerable Patriarch of Alexandria will be !” she exclaimed. “ He has been full of trouble because he has seemed out of your favour ever since those Egyptian monks came here last year——”

“ Was he offended with me ?” Eudoxia asked, interrupting her abruptly.

“ Only deeply hurt, illustrious Empress.”

“ And he will not, then, decline coming ?”

“ He will come most gladly. It will give him the opportunity he so much desires, to clear himself in your eyes from various charges.”

“ Well, I do not think the desire has troubled him hitherto,” said the Empress, coldly. “ The opportunity was offered to him a year ago ; but he did not appear at my summons.”

“ Consider, most Illustrious, the burden of his office.”

“ We will not argue the point. I may, very likely, have written too seriously.”

“ So seriously, great Augusta, that your displeasure alarmed him.”

“ Well, if I did him injustice, I will make it up to him, and write him a friendly invitation with my own hand. What do you say, Euphemia ?”

“ That it would be an immense happiness to him ; besides pointing out to him the line he ought to take when he comes—that is, if you will condescend, most Illustrious, to give him a few hints on the subject.”

“ I tell you plainly, Euphemia, that there are as many as seventy charges against the venerable Theophilus ; so that he will have to prepare his defence, and, above all, to make friends with the Egyptian monks, unless he wishes to draw down the indignation of all religious persons in Constantinople upon himself.”

“ Really ! do people think so much of those ‘ tall brothers ? ’ ”

“ The ‘ tall brothers ’ are only the spokesmen of the party. There are about fifty besides ; white-haired men, with worn features, and bare feet, dressed in the coarse garb of solitaries—the very picture of austere asceticism.

The Patriarch Chrysostom has lodged them close to the church of St. Anastasia, and given them in charge to the deaconess Olympias, who cannot find them very expensive to keep, as the good solitaries live entirely on herbs, or beans steeped in water. They are constantly at work, making straw mats, which they cannot do fast enough, the people are so eager to buy them, and then to ask their prayers. Certainly, they give one a wonderful impression of sanctity. I remember visiting the church one day, and meeting them in the sacristy. They fell at my feet, protesting their innocence of all heretical notions ; and I could not but kneel to *them*, and beg their blessing for the Emperor and my children."

"Your own piety—your own prayers—great Augusta, will bring God's blessing on all belonging to you," exclaimed Euphemia. After this conversation, she considered her wishes to be as good as fulfilled. She saw in imagination, Theophilus on the episcopal throne of Constantinople, Eugenius occupying some Thracian or Ionian see, and Chrysostom safely disposed of in a monastery at Antioch.

Florus was one of the passengers in the vessel by which the Empress despatched her letter to Alexandria. The wily Euphemia knew that he could put Theophilus *au fait* as to the state of affairs far more thoroughly than she could venture to do in writing. On taking leave of him, she said—"I trust you entirely, Florus, and therefore I will confide to you an idea of mine, which you may be able to carry out by means of some reliable person. You can easily see that it may be of great use, when the council meets, to have accurate information concerning the past

life of Chrysostom. Antioch is his native place ; he lived there fifty years. So it will be easy to learn plenty on the subject—only it is a matter which requires care and prudence."

"I know the very man for the business, noble Eugraphia," was the eager answer ; "the Syrian monk Isaac. Poor wretch ! in the inexperience and enthusiasm of his youth, he imagined that he had a vocation for the cloister—indeed, for all that I know, he may have one ; at any rate he cannot hit upon a religious house to suit him, though he is making endless journeys in search of it."

"I have no confidence in those wandering restless monks ; they are a worthless set as a rule—and one has such an instinctive antipathy to a runaway religious!"

"Far be it from me, lady, to defend Isaac, or to urge you to employ him ; only I know no one else to whom I dare entrust your commission. He is a wonderfully energetic fellow, and one who understands how to find what he is looking for."

"Always excepting a suitable monastery," said Eugraphia, laughing.

"Exceptions prove the rule, noble Eugraphia ! And perhaps he might have found a resting-place here, if the venerable Chrysostom had not given him his *conge* pretty plainly, bidding him return to his own monastery, and giving him the money for his journey. This tyrannical behaviour irritated him. He remained in Constantinople just to show the Patriarch that he owed him no obedience——"

"And lived on the money, I suppose?"

"Well, yes, at first ; but afterwards, the noble Eu-

genius took him up, especially since the deaconess Olympias dismissed the poor man so harshly."

"Ah! that was Isaac, was it? From all you say, he seems to be a contemptible creature; but as I shall pay him liberally, I dare say he will do for what we want him. Make your arrangements with him, and then you start for Alexandria, and he for Antioch. We must levy auxiliaries from all sides for the campaign we are going to begin against this detestable spirit of fanaticism."

The object of all these accusations and intrigues, meanwhile went calmly forward on the way before him, in the steps of the Good Shepherd. When his faithful deacon Serapion expressed his grief and indignation at the hostility of his enemies, the Patriarch answered gently—"It is not aimed at *me*, but at the chimera which they call by my name."

"But, whatever the aim may be, the blow strikes your Holiness," said Serapion, sadly.

"God may, perhaps, give me the grace to overcome this bitter feeling in time, my son. In the storm and convulsions of the world, many lose those Christian principles which ought to be their rule of life. They are driven this way and that; they snatch blindly, first at one prop, then at another; they adapt themselves to circumstances, and conform to the spirit of the age; and they think that we, to whom the Lord has committed the government of His Church, should do the same—once swerve from Christian principle, and the result must be an entanglement and confusion, which only God, in His own time, and by the instruments He chooses, can set straight. We must do our work, my son, as the servants

of an infinitely powerful and gracious Master, expecting a blessing from Him alone, and acknowledging that we are, in ourselves, unprofitable servants." So thought the great Patriarch; and as he thought, so he spoke, taught, and acted—always simply, calmly, and inflexibly.

" You are too holy for our sinful world, venerable Father!" exclaimed Serapion. " It seeks to turn your holiness itself into a crime, by way of justifying itself; and—may I venture to say so?—it seems to me that you might sometimes stoop a little from that lofty sphere in which you live."

" As how, my son?" asked Chrysostom, kindly.

" If you would only now and then appear at the banquets of great men—such as Optatus, the prefect of the city, for example; or if you would sometimes purchase things suited to your dignity—carpets, rich stuffs, and so on. The upper classes complain of your pride and unsociability; the merchants of your parsimony. Would it not be well to silence them?"

" When the poor, the sick, the widows and orphans, complain of my parsimony, then, good Serapion, I will gladly alter my conduct," said the Patriarch, smiling. " As for the complaints of the merchants, we will let them pass. The persons by whom they must make their profit are those who have not the charge of our Lord's suffering members. And as to the rich and great, depend upon it they would much rather have my room than my company at their banquets; they would think both my dress and my calling out of place there. Listen," and he took up a parchment-roll from the table. " listen

to these words of the great Gregory of Nazianzum, on this subject :—‘ We are not satisfied with soft downy cushions, we must have rich silken coverlids spread over them ; the floors of our apartments must be inlaid with a bright mosaic-work of flowers, and the table must be sprinkled with scented waters, as an additional effeminacy. We must have boys in the gayest gala-dresses, with long curled hair, to stand behind us, cooling the air with fans, or offering us drinks, while cooks and confectioners vie with each other in loading the table with all kinds of dishes, which air, earth, and water, are taxed to provide.’ That,” added the Patriarch, “ was the state of society in Constantinople, four and twenty years ago—and such it is now. How would it suit with the sacerdotal office to appear in such scenes ? And what end would be gained, my son, even if I did yield in all these points for the sake of pleasing the world ? ”

“ You are always right, holy Father ; but that same spirit of worldliness, which drove the great Gregory from the patriarchal throne of this city to his native place, is now arraying its forces against you.”

‘ And supposing it should drive me, too, to *my* native place, it would only be the fulfilment of the wonderful and hidden designs of the Eternal Wisdom.”

“ But think of the Church, Father—think of our holy faith.”

“ I hope you do not think that they are dependent on my remaining here,” said Chrysostom. “ The candle-stick may be removed from this or that place—darkness may reign instead of light ; but then the faith will shine in other lands, and the Church will gain more than she

loses. Oh, my son ! do not let our Lord have to say to you—‘ Oh, thou of little faith.’ ”

He did not like his clergy to talk to him or to each other of their fears. He considered it a waste of time, a weakening of the energy and vigour, of which he himself afforded such an unwearied example. He never slackened his preaching, in holding conferences with his clergy, in visiting the prisons and hospitals ; he granted interviews to all who needed help and consolation, he exercised a salutary severity towards hardened sinners, and showed the most merciful indulgence towards all who were truly penitent. And because he was so like his Divine Master, he was also to have a fellowship in His sufferings, and a share in His cross.

## CHAPTER XX.

## A FIRST MEETING.

One day Amantius begged Gunilda to introduce to the deaconess Pentadia a young girl who wished to become a catechumen. The Empress frequently employed him as her private secretary ; and this happened to be the case just at the time when this girl had left the house of her harsh pagan father, full of longing for Christian instructions and compassionate shelter. Gunilda willingly agreed to his request, only asking whether the deaconess to whom she introduced her must of necessity be Pentadia. Amantius replied in the negative, adding that she might choose whatever deaconess she pleased.

“ Then I shall take her to Olympias, for I already know her,” said Gunilda ; “ so send your *protegee* to me when you will.”

“ She is already with your women, noble Gunilda. I ventured to take this liberty, feeling sure beforehand of your consent to do this work of charity.”

“ Oh, if only we could fill our lives with such works —that would be happiness !” she exclaimed.

“ Forgive me,” returned Amantius, “ if I contradict that assertion.”

She looked at him in utter astonishment.

“Noble Gunilda, the mere *doing* of works of charity does not give happiness, but the *spirit* of charity in which they are done; and every one of our actions, even the most insignificant, becomes a work of charity when it is done in that spirit.”

“I can see how that is true,” she said. “One might do a work of charity just by way of a change, and because one was tired of other occupations—much as I am going to do now—and then one is only a little interested for the time—one has not the real satisfying peace.”

“You do yourself injustice,” Amantius replied, with sympathising kindness.

“No, I do not,” Gunilda answered, in a tone of deep melancholy. “My soul is a desert; and if all the streams in the world were to flow over it, it would be a desert still!” He was about to speak, but she stopped him. “I know what you are going to say—that it is my own fault. Perhaps so; but I am true to the faith of my fathers, and fidelity is a virtue after all.”

“Surely, in the right place and the right way. Suppose your ancestors had fed on poison, would you do so—in spite of feeling that it was slowly killing you—because it was the custom of your country?”

“Of course not, when once I was convinced of its being poison.”

“Tell me, lady, how you would think and act in such a case.”

“I should think that I was at liberty to abandon such a custom, and I would procure wholesome food.”

“And will you not do as much for your soul as you

would for your body? But it is time for me to go to the Empress, and for you to take charge of this poor Flora."

As soon as Amantius had taken his leave, Gunilda sent for Flora. She was a beautiful young girl, but very pale and timid, and apparently very much awe-struck by Gunilda, before whom she stood shy and trembling. It seems that Flora's father was a money-changer, whose love of gold was a perfect idolatry. The only god he really worshipped was money; but as he knew that paganism fostered every sordid feeling and stifled every high aspiration, he preferred it to Christianity, and compelled his daughter to join in the pagan rites which were secretly celebrated in the city. But the girl resisted. She had no mother, and the old slave who waited on her shared her father's sentiments; but she had heard from some Christian neighbours of a heavenly teaching, which seemed to her wonderfully beautiful, and in spite of much ill-usage from her father, the poor child kept faithfully to her determination to be a Christian. How to accomplish her desire she knew not. Her good neighbours advised her to appeal to the pious chamberlain Amantius; doubtless he, who stood so high in the Augusta's favour, would be able to protect her.

"And when you are a Christian—what then?" asked Gunilda.

"I do not know," answered the girl.

"But you must know what it is you wish—what you want to do," exclaimed Gunilda, half impatiently.

"To be a Christian," said Flora, in a distressed voice.

"I know that, child. But life will not come to an end

because you are a Christian ; indeed, that will really be the beginning of a new life. What will you do with yourself?"

"I do not know," repeated Flora ; "and, indeed, I do not care. I only want one thing—to be a Christian!"

"Will not your father be dreadfully angry—disinherit, disown you for his child?"

"Yes, he will do all that," said the weeping girl ; "but I must be a Christian."

Gunilda felt that she would give the whole world to possess the firm decided resolution of this simple child. She would not acknowledge it to herself, but she was secretly glad of the excuse for visiting Olympias, and comparing her, in her character of deaconess, with that ideal vision of the moonlight visit four years ago : and it was in a state of suppressed agitation that, accompanied by the quiet Flora, she entered the house she so well remembered. They were shewn into the usual reception-room, but she longed to see the room with the little vestibule and the fountain. No sooner, however, did Olympias appear, than she forgot the room and everything else ; and as soon as she had said that she had come to introduce a *protegee* of Amantius, she remained lost in contemplation of the woman who had always so strangely interested her. Olympias was only twenty-eight years old, but her hard life, together with her delicate health, had entirely robbed her face of all youthful bloom ; yet the clear lustre of her eyes, the calm purity of her expression, and the wonderfully winning simplicity of her manner, gave her a spiritual look which, combined with her delicate features and noble

bearing, made her strikingly beautiful still, and gave her a charm far beyond the transient one of youthful freshness. Gunilda thought of the faces she was accustomed to, with their beauty marred by vanity and wasted by passion, and Olympias seemed like a heavenly star contrasted with the glare of torches. She received her visitors with courteous kindness, and then, turning to Flora, asked her what it was she wished. And Flora answered as usual, "Oh, only to be a Christian!"

"You are quite right, my child," replied Olympias; "that is the all-sufficient wish for time and eternity. And when that wish is fulfilled, there is an end of all anxiety. He who has given the greatest of gifts, will surely give the rest."

"Oh, lady, how good you are!" and Flora fell at the feet of Olympias, weeping.

"God is good, my poor child, not I," said Olympias, affectionately. "I will keep you here then with me. You will have many young companions who are preparing for the holy sacrament of baptism, so you are sure to feel at home with them. Theone will take care of you."

The agitated girl could scarcely stammer out a few words of gratitude to Gunilda and Olympias. Then Theone appeared, and took her away.

"It is such a consolation to see a young creature like that so full of longing for the true faith that she goes straight to the goal, unquestioning, undoubting. Flora is acting like the three kings when they saw the miraculous star; Flora's star is the grace of God." Olympias said this with an inward joy, which lighted up all her face.

Gunilda's answer was rather cold. "I do not see why one should rejoice so thoroughly in a good beginning, not knowing whether it will last."

"No one but God knows that," returned Olympias; "but, meanwhile, we thank Him and trust Him."

"It must require a very fortunate experience in the way of conversions to have such a strong faculty of hoping," said Gunilda.

"I hope in God, and not in man; and therefore human frailty does not make me doubt, or fear."

"But we live with men," said Gunilda.

"And with God too—do we not?" asked Olympias, smiling.

"You, who once knew the court and its ways well, must be aware that the former are made much more prominent than the latter."

"As in the case of Amantius; is that your meaning?"

"The reverse of his case is the rule," said Gunilda; "and for that reason, I suppose, it strikes and influences one the most. At least, I can answer for it in my case."

"If those eastern kings had been of your way of thinking, noble Gunilda, they would have gone no further than Jerusalem; for certainly no one there had a thought of Him whom they found and adored in the cave of Bethlehem. When one is seeking the way to heaven, it is of no use to notice those who are following the ways of this world."

"Is not that pride?" asked Gunilda.

"Is there not a little secret disinclination to enter on the heavenly path in that question?" Olympias asked, in her turn.

“You are quick-sighted,” said Gunilda, with a smile, “and I think there is truth in what you say. Now, do not be angry if I ask whether you are happy?”

“What do you understand by happiness? Do you think the possession of wealth, rank, health, and good position, give happiness?”

“These are external gifts of fortune—not happiness.”

“Do you call the respect and admiration which the world—aye, the noblest of the world—gives to great virtues and talents, happiness?”

“That is homage—but not happiness.”

“The sweet joys of family life, then?—the mutual love of parents and child, of husband and wife, of congenial friends—do you call that happiness?”

“That is a transient happiness, and, therefore, not real positive happiness. I understand, by happiness, something that is mine for time and for eternity.”

“If you understand it so, then I *am* happy,” answered Olympias, and she looked at Gunilda with earnest sympathy.

“Oh, you are happy to know that you possess an imperishable treasure. That must be the only true, eternal happiness. How I should envy you, if I did not feel far more disposed to love you. And I could not bear the idea of your having become a deaconess. But if it has brought you this great gift of happiness—Oh, then you are one of God’s chosen ones, and therefore greatly to be loved.”

“It is better to love God himself,” said Olympias, quietly, and as she spoke, she rose from her seat.

“ What ! are you going to leave me ?”

“ I must ; my duties call me.”

“ And have you never time to talk with your friends, or to those to whom you do good ?”

“ Sometimes—but never for very long.”

“ That must be a great sacrifice, I think.”

“ If you think the greatest of all blessings can be gained without making many a sacrifice which it is hard to make, you are greatly mistaken. Grace will not make its home in a heart that wastes itself on earthly enjoyments. You would keep a valuable diamond in a separate casket, not among all sorts of common utensils.”

“ Well, I shall come next as a beggar ; then I shall be sure of an interview,” said Gunilda, playfully.

She left the house, with the feeling that she had found a treasure, for which she must thank God ; and without waiting to analyse her emotions, she ordered her litter-bearers to take her to Sta. Sophia. She had been in the glorious basilica before—sometimes to hear a sermon, sometimes merely in the Empress’ suite—never to pray. But prayer was a necessity to her soul to-day. She left her litter in the portico, and entered the church ; then, throwing her veil back from her face, she knelt quietly down near a pillar opposite the high altar. Sta. Sophia was never without worshippers—sometimes many, sometimes few—and so Gunilda took no notice of a young man who at first was standing at a little distance opposite to her, then went on, returned, and remained hovering near her all the time she remained in the church, except for a few minutes, during which he went into the portico to survey the litter-bearers. There were not many there ;

the young man was condescending enough to enter into conversation with Gunilda's servants, and soon learnt from them the name of their mistress. When Gunilda rose from her knees, she remarked him looking at her with fixed attention ; she turned away with a grave, dignified movement, dropped her veil, and left the church. The young man followed her litter at a distance, and when the bearers struck into the way leading to the Palace of Constantine, he disappeared in another direction, and soon afterwards presented himself, in a state of great agitation, at Euphemia's palace.

She was engaged with visitors, when one of her servants came and whispered in her ear that she was wanted on particular business. She rose, dismissed her visitors with the air of a queen, and went hastily into the little cabinet adjoining the reception rooms. "What news?" she asked, on seeing Eugenius pacing restlessly up and down the room ; "good or bad—from Alexandria or from Antioch?"

"Oh, I know nothing, and care nothing about that," exclaimed Eugenius ; "I have reached a crisis in my life with which those affairs have nothing to do."

"You have loved me like a mother," he went on, in increasing excitement, "be one to me now, and help me to gain happiness—the only happiness for me."

A long conversation followed between the aunt and nephew, the report of which we shall spare our readers. Eugenius unblushingly declared that he had been struck with the deepest admiration for the beautiful Gothic lady whom he had seen in the basilica. He had, to do him justice, a very vague idea indeed as to where this admira-

tion might lead him, but he imagined that his aunt's credit with the Empress might help him, in some way or other, to make himself acceptable to Gunilda. Euphraphia was either too conscientious, or too worldly wise, to think of encouraging him. She had not much respect, really, for the intelligence of her nephew, and she opposed his wishes strongly. Just now too—as she said, the cause which they had in hand would be ruined by any intrigue of the kind. The Patriarch's severity in maintaining discipline would be lauded to the skies, and Eudoxia herself would set no bounds to her anger.

As she spoke, Eugenius seemed calmer, and only replied by monosyllables to the warnings and arguments with which his aunt overwhelmed him. She began to think they were taking effect, but in reality he was occupied with his own thoughts. He saw that it was in vain to look to her for help or sympathy in the matter ; “but if I take things into my own hands, and they come to a crisis,” so he mused, “she will not forsake me ;—of that I am certain.”

When Euphraphia ceased speaking, Eugenius said quietly that she would think over all she had said, and then took his leave. No sooner was he gone, than she summoned Adonis to her presence. He was a little dwarfish old man, with cunning eyes, and a remarkably keen expression—her oldest and most trusted slave.

“Adonis,” she said, “I wish you to keep a strict watch over my nephew—so strict that all his goings and comings must be known, so secret that he must have no suspicion on the subject. Whether you do this yourself, or employ another person, I do not care. But one way

or other it must be done ; he is in danger of a great misfortune. Do you understand me ?”

“ Perfectly, illustrious lady. It will not do to play the spy in my own person. I am too well known to the noble Eugenius ; but my grandson, Adon, shall do it.”

“ Adon !—that boy ?”

“ He is quick and clever, and as full of cunning as a serpent ; and he is quite unknown to your illustrious nephew. He will undertake the business as much for his own pleasure as out of obedience to your commands ; an important consideration when a lad of fourteen is concerned.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

## AN INTERVIEW.

A week of painful anxiety for Euphemia succeeded the events related in the last chapter. She only saw Eugenius twice, and then when other visitors were present. Adon reported his daily visits to Sta. Sophia, where he sometimes found Gunilda ; when this was the case, he always held a conversation with her litter-bearers. Gunilda went almost every day to the house of Olympias—"as a beggar for spiritual alms," she said to Amantius. Eudoxia left her perfectly free as to her movements, knowing that this was the only way to win her. Her own thoughts were completely absorbed by the council which was so soon to meet. Sometimes a sudden fear of its possible results overpowered her ; but then she would pacify her conscience by telling herself that it was just to inquire into the conduct both of Theophilus towards the Egyptian monks, and of Chrysostom towards his suffragans and his clergy. If the charges fell to the ground, so much the better ! Of course no room must be allowed for the exercise of malicious feelings ; but it was time for the Patriarchs to learn that high place and spiritual dignity did not raise them above the laws of justice and equity.

Marsa watched her foster-daughter closely, and no sooner did she detect a kinder feeling on her part towards Chrysostom, than she fed the dying flame of her anger with fresh fuel, by representing as ascertained facts numberless calumnies of his enemies. Ever since he had taken up the defence of the innocent Tribune Nicator against her brother, the Proconsul of Cilicia, her bitterness knew no bounds.

One day, at the hour when Adon usually brought the day's report to Euphraphia, he came, accompanied this time by Adonis, with a beaming expression that promised important news. His disordered attire was quite contrary to the etiquette required by his mistress, but she only saw in this a proof of his eagerness and devotion to her service, which did not even allow him to change the clothes in which he had been running about the streets of Constantinople for a week.

“ Well,” she asked, eagerly, “ what news ?”

“ The noble Eugenius has carried off the lady Gunilda,” was the triumphant reply ; “ but I know where she is !”

Euphraphia turned pale under her paint, and sank trembling on a couch. “ Where ? Speak quickly and plainly !”

“ About sunset,” the boy began, “ I went as usual to Sta. Sophia, and posted myself behind a pillar. I had not been there long before the illustrious Eugenius passed into the church. Soon after came the lady Gunilda ; and hardly had she entered when the noble Eugenius came out, said a few words to one of the litter-bearers, and then went into the church again. I could not keep my eye on the litter steadily while I was behind the pillar,

because of the numbers of people passing and re-passing, so I walked about a bit ; and it was lucky I did so, for all at once, in a moment of confusion when several litters were meeting in the crowd, I saw the bearer to whom the illustrious Eugenius had spoken lift his arm up high, and then—how or wither, I do not know—he and his companions disappeared, and just as suddenly six new bearers, dressed exactly like the first, took their places by the litter. While I was racking my brains to find out the meaning of this, your nephew came out again, and looked very much pleased when he saw the change of bearers ; he did not speak to them this time, but only kept walking up and down the portico. Now, you see, I had to watch three things at once—him, and the litter, and the church ; so I was glad enough to see the lady Gu-nilda, veiled as usual, come out. She got into the litter, and the bearers moved off at a quick pace. I followed, through squares, up and down streets and lanes—I never knew before what a size Constantinople was !—sometimes looking back, but I saw nothing of the illustrious Eugenius. At last the litter stopped before a common-looking house, into which the lady went. A confectioner's shop was opposite, so I bought some sweetstuff, and sat down on the doorstep of the shop, watching the house. It was getting dark fast ; but not too dark for me to see the illustrious Eugenius come by-and-by, knock at the door, and go in. I was just going away, when I saw a boy of my own age, in very dirty ragged clothes, devouring the things in the shop window with his eyes. I ran up to him, and held up my last sugar-stick, saying, ‘Would you like to eat it ?’ ‘I rather think so !’ said he.

‘Very well,’ said I, ‘you shall have it and ten times more, if you will just sit down by yonder door, wait till I come back, and tell me who has been in and out. Now, is that a bargain?’ ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘if you will give me as much sweetstuff as I can eat. I have always wished to get that, just for once.’ ‘All right!’ I said, ‘wait just here.’ Then I gave him the sugar-stick, and ran off. You see, noble Euphraphia, why I wanted some one to stand sentinel—it might be late when I got back, and if the shop was shut, and all in darkness I might not find the right house very easily. No fear of my friend not knowing me again! So I have made all safe, and here I am.’”

“Bravo, Adon! You are a first rate manager,” said Euphraphia, “You shall have a whole basketful of sweetmeats. But mind you are ready to go with me. Adonis! my litter. I must hasten the Prefect. Give the order quickly. I do not want it known in the house: perhaps matters may be set straight under cover of the darkness, without anyone guessing the truth, thanks to your good management, little Adon.”

We must at once relate how it had fared with Gunilda. She had intended for some time to pay a visit to Nicarete, a friend of Olympias, and her litter-bearers had been aware of her intention. They had been bribed by Eugenius, and had given him information of the projected visit. Eugenius, who was almost too weak-headed to invent any very ruffianly designs on his own account, had jumped at the idea of having Gunilda carried off to some place where he could obtain an interview with her. The poor youth knew nothing of her character, but the bad part of his own did not include daring and resolution suf-

ficient to make him stick at nothing for the accomplishment of his plans. Gunilda, was, in reality, as far more than a match for him—even under the most disadvantageous circumstances—as a lion who has fallen by accident into the flimsy snares of a trapper for small game is more than a match for his quaking captor. Gunilda had simply thought that her own slaves were bearing her to Nicarete.

She was received by an elderly woman, who conducted her across a small court, and opening a door, begged her to enter. A little fountain played in the court, and the whole scene recalled to her mind her first visit to Olympias. “Oh, if I only knew where the truth is to be found,” so her thoughts ran, “I would embrace it at once—unconditionally, without looking further—like Flora! But where is this certain assurance? who will give it to me?” Suddenly it struck her that she had been waiting a long while; and she went to the door, intending to call some one and to send word to Nicarete that she would return the next day at an earlier hour. But the door was fastened on the outside; and with a thrill of terror, which struck cold to her heart, she knocked loudly. She called her litter-bearers. No answer. There was a stillness like death all around, and she heard nothing but the beating of her heart. “What does it mean? Where am I? Who has betrayed me?—and why?” she asked herself, and sank, trembling with fear, into a chair. In a few moments she regained her composure. “Whatever the explanation may be,” she said, half aloud, as if to make sure that her voice was steady, “whether treachery or a mistake, I shall require all my presence of

mind. Only firmness and courage can help me now.” A footstep approached, the bolt was drawn back, and in the new-comer Gunilda recognised the young man whom she had seen in Sta. Sophia. She addressed him with dignified condescension: “Are you the bearer of a message from the noble Nicarete? Can I see her to-day, or will it be more convenient to her if I call to-morrow?”

Eugenius was completely thrown off his balance by her unembarrassed manner. He stammered out—“She is not here.”

“Then I will trouble you to call my litter-bearers,” said Gunilda, walking towards the door.

Eugenius stepped before her. “One word, noble Gunilda!”

She looked at him with cold surprise, saying, “It is not my habit to talk to persons I do not know, in a strange house.”

“This house is mine, lady.”

“Yours? Then there has been a strange mistake made in some way, and the sooner I leave it the better.”

“Not till you have heard me,” said Eugenius.

He then proceeded to unfold the wonderful proposal which his ingenious brain had conceived for the accomplishment of his wishes. In a clumsy, hang-dog manner, he entreated Gunilda’s consideration for a poor young man who, through his own inexperience and the mistaken conduct of his friends, had become involved in connections which dragged him down to misery and sin. He had at length resolved to break his chain, and a way of freedom had opened to him which he could only hope to take through Gunilda’s assistance. She would, he was

sure, be ready at least to sympathize with the project, when she learnt that it was to be accompanied by the adoption, on the part of the person in question, of the Arian belief, to which she herself so firmly adhered. Such were the phrases—the true meaning of which only dawned by degrees on Gunilda—in which this miserable man, who had allowed himself to be made a member of the sacred ministry without a particle of vocation, for merely worldly ends, and, it must be added as a sort of wretched excuse, with the smallest possible modicum of theological instruction, veiled his proposal to apostatise from his faith for the sake of the lady before whom he stood.

Gunilda listened at first in utter bewilderment, and then with the most intense indignation. Strange to say—it is for this alone that the plot of Eugenius has any importance in our story—it was this interview which first fully revealed to her her own state of mind and feeling with regard to Catholicism, and thus gave the final stroke which determined her conversion. The word, “Apostate!” rose to her lips; and the poor fool before her had the effrontery to ask her whether she called Arius an apostate? “I never did—till now,” was the reply.

Eugenius had not the least power even of understanding the storm of horror which his words had aroused in her heart. She controlled herself, however, and sat silent for a time. At last, “There must be an end to all this,” she cried. “Out of my sight, renegade that you are from your faith! I demand my liberty at once.”

Eugenius felt in himself no power to resist her. At the same time, a slight movement was heard outside.

Eugenius opened the door, and met a confidential servant, who whispered, hurriedly, "There is no time to be lost, my lord ; the noble Eugraphia is with the Prefect of the city. Imagine the scandal."

Eugenius reflected for a moment, then returned to Gunilda.

"I demand my liberty," she repeated, as he entered.

"I grant it ; but on the condition that I may see you, speak to you again."

"God forbid ! I demand my liberty, unconditionally."

"Be it so, then, and judge of my feelings for you. Your wish is my law ; my litter-bearers await your orders."

"No," she said, decisively, "I have no confidence in you—I will go alone."

"Impossible ! I will rather escort you myself, or see that you are properly attended."

"And do you not understand that I have far less fear in solitude than in your company ? Happen what may, it cannot be so bad as the insult which you have offered me. Let me pass."

Eugenius stood before her, with a face of perplexity and distress. "Take my servants ; they are in readiness."

"I will accept nothing from you ; I will go at once," she said, with a look and a tone of such resolute determination that he did not venture on further remonstrance. She left the room, crossed the entrance-hall, and walked to the outer door. He made a sign to his servant to open it. On the threshold, she turned round, saying, "Let none of you attempt to follow me ; I will find my way alone."

But, brave as her words were, she was almost over-powered with nervous terror when the door closed behind her. She had never been in the city alone at any hour—never, even with attendance, in the evening. The street was narrow and retired, and wrapt in the deepest silence. She had no idea in what quarter of the city she was, nor which way to turn in order to reach the palace. Her breath came quick and short, and her feet seemed rooted to the ground ; she stood like a marble statue in her long white dress, and as motionless. But as her eyes became gradually accustomed to the dim light, she perceived the figure of a boy crouching near the door. “Do you know the way to the imperial palace ?” she asked, eagerly.

“Oh, yes, well enough ; but I am going to wait here for cakes and sweetstuff,” replied the child.

“I will give you as many sweets as you like, and a smart coat into the bargain, if you will show me the shortest way to the palace.”

The boy sprang to his feet in a moment.

“Give me your hand, my child, the light is so dim,” said Gunilda, nervously anxious to keep him at her side.

Eugenius and his servant had heard what passed ; it had been the intention of the former to follow her at a distance, but he abandoned the idea when he heard the boy speak so certainly of his knowledge of the way.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## A LITTLE TRAITOR.

Not half-an-hour after the events related in the last chapter, a centurion, with his soldiers, and accompanied by torch-bearers, appeared at the other end of the street. Adon was with them.

“Are you sure of the street?” asked the centurion.

“Quite sure; come on—we shall be there in a moment,” said the boy. He was secretly congratulating himself on his prudence in bribing the lad to stand sentry. “Otherwise,” he thought, “there would be no chance of my knowing the house again—the place is so different now that all the shops are shut;—but where is the boy gone?” Adon looked on all sides, but in vain; no one was to be seen. The street was only inhabited by working people, and the general view was of one continuous wall with doors at intervals. For the houses in Constantinople had all the rooms opening upon an inner court, and nothing, except the entrance door, was towards the street. The goods of the shopkeepers were displayed before it during the day; after sunset everything vanished into the house. So the unlucky Adon had nothing to guide him. He ran to the other end of the street in despair.

“Stop!” thundered the voice of the centurion; “you are going to run away, are you?—after playing us a trick!”

“It is not a trick!” answered the miserable Adon, “and I am not running away; I am only looking for my sentinel, and the confectioner.”

“Your sentinel has made himself scarce, it seems: but the confectioner must be somewhere,” and he ordered his men to knock with the shafts of their spears at the first door they came to. A pause—then a voice asked what was the matter. “Does a confectioner live anywhere in this street?” asked the centurion.

“The first door to the left,” answered the voice.

“You see it is all right!” cried Adon, triumphantly; and he darted with the speed of an arrow to the door described. The soldiers followed, and the knocking re-commenced, mingled with cries of “Open—open the door!”

“I will not open it!” answered a peevish voice. “Get away, you noisy rascals!”

“I am Martial, the centurion, and I am sent by the Prefect of the city to search your house; if you don’t open the door directly, I shall break it in.” The bolts were speedily withdrawn, and an old man, trembling with fear, cried out—“I am a poor man, doing an honest business—”

“Where is the young lady?” shouted the centurion.

“Do you mean my daughter?”

“Your daughter, indeed! it is one of the Empress’ ladies we are in search of.” They had soon gone over the house; but all was in vain. Adon struck his fore-

head with his clenched hand, and tore his hair. The centurion asked if there was not another confectioner in the street.

“How should I know?” was the grumbling answer. “I am not likely to go running after dainties.”

“Well, you must do so now; on with you, and show us the way.”

“What!” screamed the old man, “would you have me leave my poor house at this hour?”

“If it is so poor, there is no fear of thieves—on with you.”

“Shall I go instead?” asked an old woman, who emerged from some dark corner or other.

“Yes, do, Apollonia, and come back soon, that I may lock up the house. I am so poor,” he said, turning to the centurion, “that I have no other servant; so I beg you not to detain her.”

“Never fear. Now, old lady, show the way.”

Apollonia went back a few paces, and stopped before a door, saying—“This is the house.”

The centurion’s knock was answered by a respectable looking woman, carrying a lamp, who asked—with an air of surprise, but very calmly—what they wanted, and herself took the party over the house, explaining how it was occupied by herself and four sons, and that some of the rooms were let to friends of theirs—honest, hard-working folk; she herself had seen better days, but now she had only her sons’ earnings to look to; and indeed they did their best for her, she must say that. The search was made; nothing suspicious had been discovered. On the ground floor the woman opened the door of the

last room ; it was empty, and after a passing glance, the centurion was moving on, but Adon entered quickly, lifted his head as high as he could, drew a deep breath, and cried triumphantly—"She has been here!"

The centurion turned back, and ordered the torch-bearers to take their lights into every corner and search for a secret door or opening of some sort.

"Oh dear ! don't do that !—take away the torches!" cried Adon.

"Stupid lad ! how can one search in the dark?"

"I do not say that she is here now," said Adon ; "but I know she has been here. I could smell the scent that fine ladies use, as soon as ever I came in ; and now the nasty smell of the torches has taken it away."

"You have a good nose, my boy," said the woman, good-humouredly ; "but you have made a mistake all the same. One of my sons is a gardener, and has had flowers in this room—very choice ones, too—they have just been fetched away for a banquet which they were to decorate."

"Well, at all events, the lady is not here, and you have had the impudence to bring me out on a fool's errand, you young scamp!" said the centurion so angrily that Adon fell on his knees, and begged for mercy.

"Who would ever have suspected such a child of playing a trick like that?" said the woman of the house.

"You wicked old witch ; she *was* here, and you know it!"

She shrugged her shoulders ; "The child is regularly upset—don't be hard on him."

The centurion gave the word of command, and the

party moved off, dragging the disconsolate Adon with them. "Cunning little viper!" muttered the woman, as soon as they were out of earshot, "there is more danger in a young rogue like that than in a band of Prætorians!"

The little traitor who was the cause of Adon's misfortunes had meanwhile conducted Gunilda to the Palace of Constantine. Agitated as she had been, the long walk at that late hour seemed as if it would never end; and sometimes the thought crossed her mind that the boy might be taking her the wrong way, but she did not dare to say so. "Come on; we shall soon be there!" said her guide. But this "soon" seemed very long; and never had poor Gunilda breathed a more fervent thanksgiving than when gradually the neighbourhood became more familiar, as she recognised first a public building, then the house of the beautiful Thais, with its rich Corinthian *façade*, and last of all, the palace itself, brightly illuminated by the clustered lights at the entrance-gates, and at the posts of the Prætorians.

"Here we are!" cried the boy. "Now, have I not been a good guide?"

"Oh, yes! and I will never forget your kindness; follow me." She was quickly recognised by some of the court-servants, and one of them ran on to tell the good news to the chamberlains of the Empress. Hylas met her, saying—"I am to request the noble Gunilda to come at once to the Augusta, who has been in the most painful anxiety for three hours. Our imperial mistress has sent messengers to the noble ladies Olympias and Pentadia. The former said you had gone to the lady Nicarête, but no one in her house had seen you; and now

they are seeking you in every direction. But where *have* you been, noble Gunilda?" added Hylas, as his puzzled glance fell on her little ragged companion. She was too much exhausted to answer him, and hastened on to Eudoxia's apartments. Hylas lifted the curtain, and announced her. When the Empress saw her, with flushed cheeks, disordered hair, and wearied expression, and when she noticed the dust which soiled the hem of her garment, she cried out, in a voice of distress and astonishment—"Gunilda! where *have* you been?"

"I do not know," was the sobbing answer; and she fell senseless at Eudoxia's feet.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE ENVY THAT WAITS UPON VIRTUE.

With great state, surrounded by twenty-eight Egyptian bishops, and followed by a numerous retinue of priests and attendants, the Patriarch Theophilus had made his entry into Constantinople. Among his adherents was Severian, bishop of Gabala, the popular preacher, the favourite of the court ladies ; three other bishops of Asia Minor accompanied him. All this pomp and circumstance dazzled and delighted the populace : Chrysostom had never afforded them such a spectacle. He had invited all the bishops, who came to be present at the Council, to be his guests ; some in his palace, others in the residences attached to the Churches of Sta. Sophia and the Apostles, where preparations for their reception had been made. But they one and all declined the invitation. Eugraphia had put her splendid and spacious villa on the Bosphorus at the disposal of Theophilus, and thither he and his bishops betook themselves. He avoided all intercourse with Chrysostom : his first visit was to the Emperor and Empress, his next to Eugraphia. The good natured Arcadius, who was greatly distressed at the dissensions in the Church, gave Theophilus a kind

reception, saying, “ I trust that the little cloud which has arisen between your Holiness and the Egyptian monks, will soon pass away : at all events, I consider our revered Patriarch’s refusal to act as judge in the investigation as a good sign. It is a canon of the Church, he says, that a bishop can only be tried in his own province : the matter, therefore, will come before a secular court.”

“ My presence here, great Augustus,” said Theophilus, with cold *hauteur*, “ is a proof that I fear no court, secular or ecclesiastical, in my own province or another’s. When the justice of a Metropolitan is in question, and when it can only be proved at the Imperial Court, and beyond the limits of his jurisdiction, the canons, in my opinion, ought to give way.”

“ Such sentiments show great magnanimity on your part, venerable Theophilus,” answered the Emperor, who was slightly embarrassed by the lofty tone of the Patriarch, “ for, of course, you might have appealed to the canons as a justification of your non-appearance. But our venerable Father Chrysostom is equally magnanimous in adhering to them ; and with such feelings on either side it cannot be difficult to settle the question of the Egyptian monks. I only hope that the same spirit may be displayed at the Council which is summoned in consequence of the complaints of certain bishops against our Patriarch.”

“ Doubtless, when once it is made clear with whom the fault lies,” replied Theophilus, still in the same tone which had overawed the Emperor at the beginning. With Eudoxia, on the other hand, he was humility personified. It seemed as if no words were sufficiently de-

ferential in which to implore her patronage and favour: the shadow of her throne was his place of refuge from the assaults of his enemies—her imperial purple was the ægis of the Church: her pure and gentle hand should fix the rules for the guidance of the bishops in the discharge of their functions: not her station only, but her talents, her character, fitted her for absolute unlimited sovereignty. A different tone, this, from the grave, uncompromising admonitions of Chrysostom!

Another of Eudoxia's visitors was Bishop Severian. He was not able to preach in Constantinople: that could not be without the sanction of the Patriarch: but in private he addressed the most flattering speeches to her. He lauded the particular virtues to which the Empress was inclined, her maternal tenderness, her love for charitable works, her zeal for the Church and the true Faith. He was remarkably well versed in the Sacred Scriptures, and they formed, so to speak, the ground on which, with great address and delicacy, he wove, as it were, a dazzling embroidery of admiration. Eudoxia was charmed, her ladies still more so: the whole court rang with Severian's praises, and Arcadius joined in the chorus.

“What a farce it is!” sneered Eugraphia to Florus: “I hate being mixed up in it, only it seems taken for granted that the enemies of the Golden-mouthed Patriarch should be lost in admiration of this honey-mouthed bishop.”

“It is wonderful, noble lady, how with your earnest and weighty considerations always underlie the most frivolous matters,” replied Florus, who played much the same part to Eugraphia that Severian did to the Empress.

“ When will that monk Isaac return ? ” she asked impatiently : “ sources of information must be either very rich or very scanty in Antioch, to keep him so long.”

“ Lady, I must confess that he has been back some time, and that the journey was without result.”

“ Then he has failed either in good management or good will,” cried Euphraphia angrily.

“ Not so, lady ; he failed from lack of material.”

“ Do you mean to tell me that in a place where Chrysostom spent fifty years, there is no one who can point out *one* flaw in his character, or his life ? Florus, I will never believe it ! ” Florus only replied by a silent shrug of his shoulders. “ What ! ” she went on : “ could there be found in him no profligacy as a student, no corruption as a lawyer, no ambition, no tyranny as a priest ? . . . . speak, Florus, is this possible ? ”

“ So it seems, illustrious Euphraphia : his memory is as much loved and honoured in Antioch as his presence and his way of life were formerly. We can only regard the change as a lamentable instance of human weakness. In a subordinate position he aimed at an ideal perfection ; and no sooner does he stand in higher places than he is dazzled by the lustre of his position, and the ideal becomes fainter every day—a second Icarus whose waxen wings melt when he comes too near the sun.”

“ A very poetical thought, my good Florus, but one that conveys a very unpalatable truth,” said Euphraphia in a tone of annoyance. “ Well, we must go to work differently, that is all. The venerable Theophilus is doing his part in a masterly manner.”

“ Yes ! ” cried Florus enthusiastically : “ the whole

city is dazzled, enchanted, from the highest to the lowest. Never did a man gain so large a party in so short a time. The upper classes rave of his magnificent entertainments ; the people of his lavish generosity. And then he always says the right thing at the right time, a word of flattery here—a promise there. I do wish you could see him in public,—you would appreciate his power of ruling men.”

“ If he gives gold and flattery without stint, I do not wonder at any amount of success,” was the cold reply. “ Those are the levers which move the world.”

“ You forget the third lever,” said Florus with fulsome servility, “ the rarest of all, illustrious Euphrasia, and one which is at the command of few : the art of governing—the genius for command.”

“ Such as the Augusta possesses, for instance ?” but her well-pleased smile showed the power of the second lever in her instance. “ Have you seen Eugenius ?” she went on : “ his state of mind fairly puzzles me. Instead of being glad that his insane proceeding the other evening has been kept secret, he raves about its failure, and is absolutely useless to our great enterprise.”

“ For one thing, the lady Gunilda’s serious illness has been a great trouble to him, and still more so a report of the truth of which I cannot answer.”

“ What is that ?”

“ That she intends joining the Catholic Church.”

“ Mere ante-chamber gossip, my good Florus ! You know my affection for Eugenius, but to suppose that an interview with him can make Gunilda favourably disposed to the Catholic Church is rather too much ! I sup-

pose she spoke in the delirium of the fever, and her maids were ready enough to report what the Empress likes to hear—that is the truth I fancy.”

“ Possibly—but this ante-chamber gossip has put Eugenius in a desperate state. You see he has made up his mind to become an Arian and to marry the lady Gunilda.”

“ We must pray fervently that she may be enlightened, and receive the truth,” said Eugraphia piously. “ It is to be desired not only for the sake of her soul, but on my poor nephew’s account ; for, of course, her conversion would put the idea of such a marriage out of the question.”

The inquiry which was made into the case of the Egyptian monks resulted, in spite of the efforts and bribes of Theophilus, in proving them innocent of all heretical taint and insubordination. Eudoxia, who took a great interest in these good men, was so glad to see them acquitted, and Theophilus willing to be reconciled to them, and to allow their return to Egypt, that in her eyes he was already cleared of every charge ; and, as might be expected, no one ventured to believe anything against the man on whom the Empress looked with favourable eyes. Chrysostom rejoiced sincerely at the reconciliation of the Patriarch of Alexandria and the monks ; into the rest of the question he did not enter. His life, his thoughts, his aims were as far apart from those of Theophilus as the east is from the west : and the two Patriarchs lived in Constantinople as in two different planets, the one of which gravitated to the sun of courtly favour, the other to the Sun of Justice. The monk Isaac’s failure showed that it was hopeless to get

witnesses against Chrysostom from Antioch, and Theophilus saw that it would not do to be too nice as to the charges : he took whatever came in his way, without inquiring too closely as to the source of the complaint ; and, alas, there was many a traitor in the priesthood. The rehearsals of the treacherous drama took place in the house of Euphraphia, and Marsa too was ready with her advice.

“ Such an important affair as this requires great caution and prudence,” said Theophilus to Euphraphia. “ You, my daughter, are far better able to judge how the land lies, than I and my brethren who come from a distance ; in many points your views must be our guide ; yours, and those of your friend, the noble Marsa.”

“ I have consulted with her, reverend father, according to your wish, and we are agreed in thinking that it would be absurd to attempt grounding an accusation on any charge of immorality. His youth appears to have been absolutely spotless : the closest inquiries in Antioch have found no single point to lay hold of : then as to his life here, it has been so simple, so austere, that it would have made him a saint, but for the harshness and bitterness of his character, which have made him a very scourge of humanity. The charges which are sure to be substantiated must be founded on his inexorable severity, his merciless tyranny.”

Theophilus made a note or two on the documents which he had in his hands : then he said, “ The charge of violating the canons is clearly made out ; we bishops are unanimous on that point. He has suspended men from their sees, who were not proved guilty of simony ;—at least,

they deny the charge ! But my daughter, how about the charge of high-treason ? is that safe ground ? can that expression of his with regard to the Empress be considered in that light ? and is it certain, or only probable, that he made use of it ?”

“ It is certain, reverend father ; Florus, a young priest, whom my friend Marsa educated from boyhood, and in whom I myself take a strong interest,——”

“ I know, my daughter ; I am not likely to forget so distinguished a young man.”

“ Florus, then, whom you are pleased to mention so graciously, is himself a victim of the Patriarch’s tyranny : Chrysostom persecutes him relentlessly for one or two youthful excesses, over which he might rather have thrown the mantle of charity.”

“ My daughter !” said Theophilus, with an air of lofty virtue, “ the dignity of his office demands a pure and holy life, otherwise the people lose their reverence for the priest, and despise him either as a disorderly liver, or a hypocrite, and we priests must consider others beside ourselves. I feel convinced that you agree with me, and that your meaning was, that while the theory must be uncompromising in its strictness, there is such a thing as moderation and gentleness in its exercise. But proceed, I beg.”

Eugraphia expressed her agreement with the Patriarch’s sentiments by a respectful obeisance, before she continued, “ Florus is very constant in hearing Chrysostom’s discourses, and he was present on the occasion of his comparing the Augusta to Jezebel.”

“ Of course, if Florus heard it, that is sufficient : still I doubt whether it amounts to high-treason.”

“What, my venerable father!” exclaimed Eugraphia: “not to slander the Imperial Majesty from his pulpit, before the multitude! I assure your Holiness, that we regard it as nothing less in Constantinople, and it would greatly surprise the Empress to hear that you hold a different opinion.”

“I did not say that,” returned Theophilus, calmly: “your zeal is very edifying, my daughter.”

“Of course,” she went on, “his adherents say that his words are not only distorted by forced constructions, but that false additions are made to them. But, reverend father, this cannot be the case in this instance. Only the gloomy hatred of a fanatic, like Chrysostom, could suggest such a comparison for our noble, admirable Empress. I rely on the testimony of Florus absolutely.”

“It seems to me,” said Theophilus, complacently, “that we have in our hands sufficient materials for deposing from the Patriarchal throne a man who so dishonours it. There appears to be one unanimous cry of indignation against him.”

“Not so, reverend father,” said Eugraphia: “the Court, and a part of the clergy and the people, are opposed to him; but by far the greater number of both these are his devoted partisans. You, in your wisdom, will know what measures should be taken to ensure success.”

“I will go at once to the Emperor, and propose that the Council shall not be held in this city,” Theophilus answered, without hesitation.

“Ah! how well and clearly your Holiness sees what course to take!” cried Eugraphia.

“ You think then, that I may be sufficiently sure of the Augusta’s approval, to venture on making this proposal to the Emperor ?”

“ Perfectly sure, venerable father : only I would suggest that you do this at once. What is safe to-day may not be so to-morrow. The illustrious Empress is young and excitable, and her opinions and judgment vary with her feelings. Some weeks since, my nephew, Eugenius, poor fellow ! unluckily involved himself in an affair which certainly was unbecoming in an aspirant to the episcopate : Eudoxia was out of herself with indignation, and full of praises of the Patriarch’s strict discipline : in fact, she was on the verge of a reconciliation with him. Then—I was nearly saying fortunately !—came the history of Jezebel, and set her as much against him as ever.”

“ How lamentable it is,” said Theophilus, sighing, “ to see persons influenced in their conduct by their passions !” Then he went to the Emperor.

Eudoxia had learnt who had been guilty of Gunilda’s abduction from Eugraphia, not from the Gothic maiden, who did not know Eugenius. Eugraphia had thrown herself at the Empress’ feet, and implored her not to let the matter be inquired into, and Gunilda made the same request, not out of pity for Eugenius, but because she shrank from having her name dragged before the public. Eudoxia shared this feeling, and so, for Gunilda’s sake, Eugenius was spared. The affair was not spoken of, and Gunilda’s illness was ascribed to the violent agitation of mind consequent on her resolution to abjure Arianism. As Eugraphia had said, these events disposed the Empress

more favourably towards the Patriarch, and she openly praised the uncompromising severity with which he visited any dereliction of the path of duty on the part of a priest. Nothing, therefore, could have seemed more opportune to his enemies, than the sermon which has been spoken of. Eudoxia wept tears of passionate anger—but it never occurred to her to ascertain the truth of the story from impartial witnesses; and Arcadius, as usual, saw only with her eyes. Amantius, indeed, tried to show her that the Patriarch had merely taken Jezebel as the type of an abandoned soul: but she would not hear him: so truth was silenced, and falsehood triumphed. Everything favoured the plan of Theophilus. He represented to the Emperor that it would be unadvisable, on every ground, to hold the Council at Constantinople: Chrysostom had, no doubt, fanatical partisans in the city, who would create a disturbance if the issue were contrary to their wishes: and, on the other hand, he would not answer for the hot heads of the Alexandrian sailors, great numbers of whom were in the city, and who were devoted to himself. He therefore strongly advised that the Council should meet at Chalcedon, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus: and, as might have been prophesied, Arcadius agreed to the proposal.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## A CHRISTIAN HERO.

All Constantinople was in excitement—in the imperial palace, in the house of the Patriarch, in the streets and lanes of the city, in the crowded harbour—all minds were occupied with one subject. About forty bishops had rallied round Chrysostom, detesting the character and the conduct of Theophilus. The latter was so sure of success, that he openly asserted the one object of the Council to be the deposition of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The bishops who were faithful to Chrysostom, were deeply grieved at the choice of Chalcedon for the place of meeting. They felt that the Church of God was attacked in his person, and they were determined to meet the danger with him. He himself did not seem to notice the injustice which they felt so acutely; he preserved an unshaken tranquillity, and a close union of his will with the will of God. One day a lady requested an interview with him; he was pressingly engaged, but her message was so earnest that he would not refuse her. As soon as she was shown in, she knelt down on the threshold, threw back her veil, and said, lifting her clasped hands to him—“I am the daughter of the unhappy gen-

eral Gainas, and I entreat your Holiness to receive me into the number of the catechumens ; and also to forgive me for many bitter things which I have said against you, without any reason but my own perverted ideas."

"May God bless you and your resolution," said the Patriarch, with thankful gladness ; "you are entering the ark in a time of storms—that shows a firm faith, which causes me double joy ; a doubting spirit would scarcely venture now."

"I have no doubts," said Gunilda, calmly.

"And what blessed instrument has God made use of to get this grace for you?—Olympias?—Amantius? they have both confided to me their hopes and wishes for you."

"Holy father," said Gunilda, "I have a cold, proud heart—one which cannot be moved by soft and gentle influences ; it was given to no saintly soul to win mine, but to a man on the brink of apostacy—a renegade to the truth for the sake of his own passions—and this man was a Catholic priest."

Chrysostom looked at her searchingly—"Such an experience usually repels persons."

"Yes," she said, quietly ; "those of little faith." An unutterable joy lighted up his face, and Gunilda continued—"this unhappy man defended his purpose by the example of Arius : he said I was unjust in blaming him for a course which I commended in the Alexandrian priest. These words pierced me to the heart—a ray of light flashed before the eyes of my soul—the bandages fell from them—and I saw clearly the gulf dividing sects

from the Church of God, how they have their origin in human error, and she in the one eternal, changeless Truth. And because she is immutable and divine, the apostacy of nations, nay, even of her own priests, does not touch her in the essence of her being. A rotten branch, a worm-eaten leaf, may fall from the tree, but it remains green and flourishing as before. And so it is with the evergreen tree of the Church: in her shadow I will pitch my tent, and set up my rest for ever."

"Yes; that is the spirit in which to meet the confusion and the trial of times like ours," answered Chrysostom; "to put one's trust in the merely human element of the Church is to lean upon a broken reed; *you* are trusting in the divine—in the promise of the Lord, which can never fail or disappoint; my daughter, it is well with you."

Gunilda repeated her request to be admitted without delay among the catechumens; and the Patriarch referred her to Olympias, whose especial charge they were. "May the Spirit of Truth enlighten you, my child, and lead you into all truth. And remember to pray for the Church, and for us, her unworthy servants, that this fire of suffering may be for her glory and our cleansing."

Weeping for joy, Gunilda fell at his feet; he blessed her with the sign of the cross, and dismissed her. She went at once to Olympias, who in this joyful news forgot for a while the painful anxiety which she, in common with all true children of the Church, felt on account of their beloved Patriarch. The Empress was strangely

cold on this occasion. At another time she would have been full of joy and triumph ; but her character was curiously capricious, and the feeling which happened to be the predominant one absorbed her to the exclusion of every other. Just now she was in a state of feverish excitement about the Council, and had no interest to spare for the event for which she had longed for years.

Theophilus had taken up his abode in a palace which had been built by Rufinus, in a suburb of Chalcedon, called that of "the Oak." It was beautifully situated, and adjoining it were a church and a monastery. There he had assembled the bishops of his party ; no fear there of a rising of the people of the imperial city—for the Bosphorus lay between ; no fear, either, of a voice being raised in Chrysostom's behalf there, as the bishop of Chalcedon was one of his bitterest enemies. To these men, who were the principal framers of the charges against him, and so were at once accusers, witnesses, and judges—to them, and to certain cowardly priests from Constantinople who came as witnesses against their Patriarch, Theophilus read aloud the charges agreed upon with Euphemia, and set forth *in extenso* by Severian and others. Great stress was laid upon the charge of high-treason : a report was current not only in Chalcedon, but in Constantinople, that it might cost Chrysostom his head. The news spread to the Patriarchal Palace, and filled the bishops there assembled with indignation at the injustice, and with deep anxiety for the future. They pressed round him with affectionate sympathy, and he spoke to them words of tranquil cheerfulness, saying that as the Catholic Faith did not begin, so neither would it

end with him. He was innocent of anything deserving death or deposition, "but, in any case," he added, in the words of the great Apostle, "to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a young priest announcing the arrival of the Egyptian bishops with a message to Chrysostom from Chalcedon. He received them in the great hall of the palace surrounded by the forty bishops who had been cited by the Emperor to inquire into the charges against Theophilus. But the messengers were in no way impressed by this: they knew on whose support to count, and they proceeded to read a paper summoning Chrysostom and his deacon Serapion to appear before the Council of "the Oak." A loud murmur of disapprobation ran through the hall, which ceased as soon as the calm voice of the Patriarch was heard. "I do not admit that any one has ground of accusation against me: but if it is the will of God that the principles that regulate my life and my conduct should be examined by enlightened teachers of the Church, I am ready to appear before the bishops at "the Oak," or before a Council of all the bishops of the world, but only on condition of the exclusion of my declared enemies, for I cannot consent to be judged by my accusers. I demand the withdrawal of Theophilus and Severian. Their hostility to me is spoken of everywhere, it is sung of on the boards of the theatre. Let them be excluded from the deliberations of the Council, and I am ready; but only on that condition: this is my final answer."

A second priest appeared to announce the arrival of a private secretary from the Emperor. His errand was to

deliver to Chrysostom the imperial command that he should appear before the Council: and the answer he received was the same which had already been given to the Egyptian bishops. The one returned to the Palace of Constantine, the others to Chalcedon, while Chrysostom went into the Church of Sta. Sophia. Multitudes of the faithful were there, praying for their Patriarch, for his life, for his safety, for an end to all this strife and division. As he ascended the pulpit, they broke into bitter weeping—they stretched out their arms as if to detain him, for they thought he came to bid them farewell: but his object was to calm excitement, and to preach submission. “The waves are high, and the tempest loud,” he said, “but what have we to fear whose feet are on a rock? The sea may roar, but the rock stands firm: the waves may rise, but the ship of the Church shall not sink! What is the danger?—Banishment? But ‘the earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof:’ or poverty? but ‘we brought nothing into this world, and certainly we can carry nothing out:’ or death? O my beloved brethren, ‘to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’ The rage of the storm, the fury of the deep, the wrath of men are less to me than threads of gossamer. Lord! Thy will be done. If God will keep me here, I stay here thankfully—if He calls me elsewhere, thither will I go as thankfully.”

His brave calm courage soothed and strengthened them—the very sound of his voice, the glance of his eye was comfort—they trusted in him as children in a father. He might have spoken all day and through the night, and they would have gone on listening: indeed they only felt

sure of him within those sacred walls. On his leaving the pulpit, their tears burst forth afresh: he promised to speak to them again on the morrow: then they let him go—but all that night there were worshippers in Sta. Sophia.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## FIRST LOVE.

The court and the whole city were talking of Gunilda's conversion. In those days all regarded the true faith as a princely jewel, not excepting even those whose lives were in opposition to its precepts. Amongst others Euphraphia rejoiced in the news, as became a good Catholic, such as she considered herself. Not so Eugenius ; all that he saw was that this step of Gunilda's opened up an impassable gulf between himself and her ; and his hatred to the Catholic Church in consequence became intense. Chrysostom was its representative, and without having the slightest ground for his belief, Eugenius assumed that his influence had effected Gunilda's conversion. This state of mind made him a willing tool in the hands of the Patriarch's enemies. The arch-priest of Constantinople, Arsacius, was a brother of Nectarius, and consequently uncle to Eugenius. He was a very feeble and aged man, completely governed by Euphraphia, and therefore devoted to the interests of Theophilus. Eugenius was constantly about him, accompanied him to the Council of "the Oak," and supported his charges against Chrysostom, which were those of tyranny and arbitrary dealing with the clergy. He was continually

going backwards and forwards between Chalcedon and Constantinople, to report to Euphemia—and through her to the Empress—how matters were progressing. At last Euphemia ventured to introduce her nephew into the Augusta's presence, that he might tell his story himself. Under no other circumstances would Eudoxia have allowed this. It so happened that Gunilda was with the Empress when Eugenius came. Instinctively, she started from her seat, and placed herself between him and her mistress. But Eudoxia said coldly, “You may go, Gunilda; I wish to be alone.”

Gunilda obeyed, feeling as if she had been stabbed to the heart. She had always till that day struggled against the belief that Eudoxia was the mainspring of the conspiracy against the Patriarch; but if it had come to this—that she received Eugenius to discuss with him the steps taken by the Council—then there was no longer room for doubt. It was a terrible trial. Gunilda dearly loved the Empress, who had been the same faithful friend and motherly protectress to her after the treason of Gainas as before—she owed her the deepest gratitude for the unvarying forbearance Eudoxia had shewn towards her abrupt, proud, and defiant spirit—she admired the Empress' natural gifts and good qualities, and hoped great things of her in the future. But if Eudoxia was actually allying herself with the base against the noble—with Eugenius against Chrysostom—there was indeed an end to the Gothic maiden's dreams.

After dismissing Eugenius, the Empress recalled Gunilda, and said, with some embarrassment, “I am sorry that you happened to meet Eugenius.”

“So am I ; but not on my own account,” Gunilda answered, as she knelt by Eudoxia’s side.

The Empress raised herself a little on her couch, saying, “Not yet baptised, and already, so far as boldness of speech goes, a disciple of Chrysostom ?”

“It is my desire and intention to be baptised ; and therefore, before all things I am a child of the Church,” was the gentle answer.

“And, as such, you should practise humility.”

“I know it, dearest lady ; but, believe me, I did not speak in a spirit of arrogance, but in deep distress of mind.”

“You were always given to take exaggerated views of things, I know,” said Eudoxia more gently : “I think a child of the Church ought to preserve her tranquillity under any change in her external circumstances.”  
under any change in her external circumstances.”

“Certainly ; if the providence of God orders the change.”

“Or permits it,” added the Empress.

“The Augusta knows too well for me to tell her how immense the difference is between the two cases. God permits the weed to grow with the wheat ; but he does not tell us to value it as highly ; still less to pluck up the wheat for the sake of the weed. It seems to me that just now every effort is being made to force the growth of the weed in the Church : and her children cannot see that unmoved.”

“At the last day Our Lord will make an eternal separation between them,” said Eudoxia ; “till then we have to decide which is which according to our conscience.”

“Mighty Augusta !” exclaimed Gunilda ; “when

Chrysostom and Eugenius are opposed to each other, can any conscience hesitate as to where the right lies?"

" You are illogical, my good Gunilda," said the Empress, sarcastically ; " the Church which you are about to enter is the one acknowledged by Engenius."

" Yes ; I shall enter it in spite of his belonging to it ! I believe that the Church which can maintain purity of doctrine, and be the mother of saints, notwithstanding the presence of such traitors, must be the true Church. Hundreds like this Eugenius would not keep me from entering it for they are there only as the weeds are in the wheat-field."

" You are a true disciple of a fanatical master," cried Eudoxia, angrily ; " like him, uttering reckless words of harsh condemnation !"

" Not so," was the calm reply ; " I know that the simile cannot be carried out—man is not a plant without reason or will—millions have been converted, so may Eugenius be. But I also know that my master is no fanatic, but the loving disciple of the Divine Saviour Who died for us poor sinners, yet Who threatens the wicked with everlasting punishment."

" Gunilda, I rejoice in your conversion—in the eagerness with which that grave, earnest, nature of yours drinks in the Christian doctrine ; but beware of laying too great a stress on external events. As I said before, they do not affect the interior life of the Church."

" My imperial mistress, I do not presume to contradict you, but Our Divine Lord does so, for He has said that the good shepherd defends his flock against the wolf, while the hireling flees ; and therefore there are external

events which must be resisted because one cannot say that they do not affect the interior life of the Church. Imagine Eugenius—a man who was willing to abjure his faith for the sake of an Arian girl—ruling in a bishop's see ! Would such a one defend that Gospel which he was about basely to renounce, against heathens, heretics, or imperial aggression ! No—a thousand times no ! And can too great a stress be laid on such a danger ? Especially, oh good and pious Augusta, when the patriarchal throne of Constantinople is menaced with such a peril."

" I acknowledge your intentions are good, Gunilda ; and in consideration of that, I forgive the boldness which allows you to offer uncalled for advice to the Empress of the East. As for the Patriarchate of Constantinople, you may leave all that concerns it, I think, to the judgment of the venerable bishops now assembled in council. As *I* presume neither to judge nor to act in this matter, you will, I hope, follow my example."

" Would to God that you *would* act—act as becomes your noble nature, your high intellect." She raised her clasped hands imploringly to Eudoxia, who looked at her with mingled feelings of pity, affection, and anger.

" Gunilda bribing with flattering words ?" she said.

" No, great Augusta ; she does but remind you of the great talents which God has given you to use for His glory and the good of His Church. Oh, be true to them, and to God ! Do not let human motives"—

" In short," Eudoxia interrupted ; " I am to be guided by your inspirations !"

" That is the last thing I should imagine," Gunilda answered, with quiet dignity.

“ You are in all the first fervour of your conversion,” said the Empress, “ longing for the day of your baptism, lamenting that you have to wait till Easter for that unspeakable grace. A certain excitement of feeling is natural under such circumstances ; and so is the disposition to see the Church bathed in the rosy light of perfection. These are the days of first love—of bridal love ; in which everything is measured by one standard, and rejected if it does not agree with it. By and bye, other days will follow—days when calm reason will assert her rights—when the voice of prudence will be raised for or against this or that step. These days are in store for you as for others ; and when they come you will understand me better than you do now. I can give you no stronger proof of my affection than by keeping you near my person in spite of the audacity of your expressions, which I account for—in a great measure—by that bold, uncompromising, Gothic nature of yours.”

As the Empress dismissed her, Gunilda sighed from the bottom of her heart, “ Oh Lord, never let me forsake my first love !”

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE SENTENCE.

The great Patriarch had received a second summons from Theophilus: and, in order that it might come in the most insulting way, it was this time sent, not by bishops, but by Florus and Eugenius. Chrysostom calmly replied that his answer to the summons had been already given; but not choosing to put himself into communication with the assembly at “the Oak” by means of these unworthy priests, he requested two venerable bishops to go to Chalcedon, and there repeat the conditions under which he would consent to appear. Eugenius and Florus were extremely provoked at the manner in which they were ignored by the Patriarch; and while the latter hastened to Euphrasia, Eugenius returned to Theophilus to report the obstinate refusal of Chrysostom to appear. When, soon after, the two bishops arrived, Theophilus refused them an audience. Arsacius, Severian, and other bitter enemies of the Patriarch pressed him for a sentence, and at the same time came an imperial message urging a speedy conclusion to the proceedings, in order to prevent a rising of the excited populace. Chrysostom’s refusal to appear before his open enemies was used by them as a fresh

weapon against him, and he was declared guilty of disobedience to the Church, and pronounced unworthy to fill the patriarchal throne. It was a convenient arrangement, and precluded the necessity of entering into any of the other charges ; they were superfluous now.

Chrysostom had spent the day in consoling and tranquillising the minds of the faithful ; then, from the pulpit of Sta. Sophia, he spoke to a vast multitude of the contempt of the world and all its transitory joys and sorrows, and of the eternal joys to be given, in another world, to the faithful soldiers of the cross. Then, again, he was in the sacristy, giving good counsel or exhortations to different persons, who heard his voice for the last time. By and bye he hastened to his palace, where a crowd of the poor and distressed were waiting for him ; and after that to the hospitals, whose inmates were unwilling either to be cured or to die without once more receiving the blessing of their beloved Patriarch.

In the imperial palace there was excitement of a different kind. It was Eugraphia who had sent to Chalcedon, urging the conclusion of the matter, and Arsacius detained the messenger till sentence had been given ; he wrote two lines to Eugraphia, which she communicated to Eudoxia, who thus received the news before Arcadius. Now that the decision was in her hands—for whatever she advised he would do—she was appalled. “Death !” she gasped out ; “no, never !”

“It might be the wisest plan,” said Eugraphia ; “but one’s feelings are at strife with one’s judgment.”

“Banishment to some monastery in Antioch would equally prevent him from being dangerous ; besides, it

would be no unwelcome abode to him, and would gain for you the character of moderation ; and that is worth considering, great Augusta,” said Marsa, who was present.

“A moderation which would be an insult to the Council !” exclaimed Euphraphia. “Let him feel the severity which he has so long practised ! and if banishment *is* to be his fate, it should not be to Antioch, or a monastery, but to the farthest oasis of the Lybian desert.”

“It is a terrible position—it is so fearfully difficult to decide rightfully—others must be consulted,” said the Empress, in great distress. She clapped her hands, and said to the maid of honour who answered her summons —“Go, Aglae, and send Gunilda here.”

“She went early in the morning to the deaconess Olympias. Shall I send for her, great Augusta ?”

“No ; it will take too much time,” said the Empress. “I will speak to Amantius instead.”

“Surely,” pleaded Marsa, when Aglae had left the apartment, “the Augusta might spare herself such an agitating interview, considering that the sentiments of Amantius on the subject are well known.”

Euphraphia said nothing ; but she thought that the opposition of Amantius would advance their designs more than any advocacy of theirs. She knew Eudoxia well !

Amantius came : he was pale and agitated. As soon as she saw him, the Empress exclaimed—“I see you know all !”

“Only what the whole city knows,” he answered.  
“And that is ?”—

"That the sword of the executioner is hanging over the head of the Patriarch."

"No," she said, "it has not come to that."

"Not yet; but his enemies aim at nothing less. And they are said to be powerful."

"Not so powerful as the Augusta," she answered, haughtily.

"Would to God that she would use her power! never could it defend a nobler cause."

"All do not share your sentiments," she answered, more coldly.

Amantius replied, with the deepest respect in his tone and bearing—"True, illustrious Empress; only those who know both the Patriarch and his enemies thoroughly."

Marsa and Euphemia had moved to a little distance; the former trembled with anger, and could hardly restrain herself from a passionate outburst; but her friend whispered—"Be silent: he will ruin the 'noble cause' as fast as we can desire."

"I know what a strong partisan of Chrysostom you are," said the Empress; "and therefore I have not the remotest intention of asking you what is the right and what the wrong of the question. What I wish you to tell me is what impression the execution of the sentence in all its rigour would make on the body of the faithful."

"An unspeakably painful one," he answered. "But if it is so clear to you, great Augusta, where the right lies, there can be no fear of a severe sentence."

As Eudoxia's countenance darkened, those of the ladies cleared. "When the charge is one of high trea-

son," she said, "it is, to say the least, rash to be so ready to pass your word for his innocence."

"Oh, that you would take my word, great Augusta!" cried Amantius. "I would pledge my life that the charge is groundless. True to his God, his Church, his flock—how can he be false to his Emperor? The whole of his long and faithful life gives the lie to such an accusation."

"His temperament is naturally quick—so people say—for I should not have guessed it in conversation with him," said the Empress; "and this leads him to take up strong antipathies, and to allow himself a liberty of speech which is most offensive to loyal subjects; and if it were not for the attachment you have so long shown to the imperial house, I confess that this blind partisanship of yours might awaken suspicions on your own behalf."

"The disciple is not above his master," Amantius answered, calmly; "if the Patriarch is suspected, I cannot complain that I am."

"I understand that pride which feigns humility," said the Empress, angrily. "Gunilda, Chrysostom and you—you all speak alike."

"So must every disciple speak, who strives—whatever his circumstances may be—to follow in the steps of his Divine Master."

"Enough!" cried Eudoxia, with passionate vehemence; "I understand all this unmeaning talk! I ask for a word of information to help me in my perplexity, and I ask in vain. I do not want to hear your confession of faith."

She turned away; and in great distress of mind Amantius withdrew. In the ante-chamber, Hylas hastened to meet him, and put a paper into his hand. Amantius

glanced at it with an expression of pain on his face, returned to the apartment of the Empress, and gave it to her in silence, kneeling.

She turned paler. "Ah! from the Council; is it not?"

"From Chalcedon," he answered. He would not acknowledge the meeting at "the Oak" to be a lawful Council. She sat for a long time after he had retired, perfectly motionless, with the unopened paper in her hand.

"Did you observe his imprudent protest against the Council?" whispered Eugraphia to her friend. But Marsa made no answer; she was watching the Empress. Suddenly Eudoxia arose, passed her hand across her forehead, and said, in a determined tone—"It is folly to torture myself in this way; the decision rests with the Emperor, not with me. I will take the sentence contained in this paper to him, and leave it to his wisdom whether strict justice shall be tempered with mercy or not. Oh, what a relief not to decide myself!" She sought her husband's apartments. As might be expected, Arcadius was greatly startled at the charge of high treason, and said—with the clear-sightedness of an honest heart—"The reckless manner in which so serious an accusation is made without any sufficient ground against the Patriarch makes it very likely that the other charges are equally without foundation. I shall not, therefore, confirm the sentence; and I assent to the demand of Chrysostom that his opponents shall not be his judges in the Council which is to try his cause."

"Certainly, my dear lord," said Eudoxia, with the winning manner she always used to Arcadius—"a sentence of death would be sinful, and one of banishment

cruel. Still, on the other hand, I think some consideration is due to such men as the Patriarch of Alexandria, and the Bishop of Gabala, and our venerable Arsacius, who have shown the view they take by the severity of the sentence. Does it not strike you so?"

"Oh, yes, surely!" said Arcadius, whose judgment already wavered at this suggestion.

"Still," Eudoxia continued, "it would be right to express concurrence in their views in the mildest possible way; would it not?"

"In the very mildest! and even then it goes against me to do it," sighed the Emperor.

"Oh, you true son of a saintly mother!" exclaimed Eudoxia; "we all know that the pious Flacilla always pleaded the cause of mercy with the great Theodosius. And in this case, my dearest lord, it is very necessary—for one ought to respect the strong feeling of the faithful for the Patriarch. It may be a little exaggerated, but it is sincere."

"I am sure I quite agree with that," said the poor, puzzled Emperor; "only among all these difficult considerations one does not see one's way very clearly."

"Would it not perhaps be most worthy of the Augustus, just simply to assent to the deposition of the Patriarch, without going into individual charges?"

"And suppose he is innocent of them all?" cried Arcadius, uneasily.

"He can hardly be that, can he?" said Eudoxia, with her winning smile. "A large proportion of the clergy—the least strict among them, I grant, are utterly opposed to him. This shows either a want of considerateness

and indulgence—and in this case he is not altogether innocent—or else a lack of tact and talent for reading men's characters and utilising their qualities, which would show an unfitness for the exalted post which he now occupies. Let us take the latter case for granted, my dear lord. That leaves his character entirely untouched; and makes his quiet removal desirable—might I not say necessary? His influence over the clergy is not a salutary one. He requires too much; and a man who does that hinders others from developing many good qualities which would be drawn out and fostered by a less strict authority. It is sad that this should be the case, I now; but it is a consequence of human weakness—it does not do to string the bow too tightly.”

And Arcadius, as he looked at the bright eyes and rosy lips of the advocate of human weakness, was fully convinced of the soundness of her arguments. “But if I sanction the deposition of the Patriarch, what will be his fate?” faltered the Emperor.

“His fate, my lord? you have only to give him perfect liberty of action, and, as gladly as a bird escapes from its cage, Chrysostom will fly to the sacred solitude of a cloister, or an anchoret's cell.”

And thus, actually without an allusion to the charge of high treason, the Emperor confirmed the sentence passed at “the Oak,” which was immediately notified to the Patriarch, with a command to leave Constantinople without delay. Evening was drawing on, and, wearied with the unremitting labours of the day, he had retired to his little cell-like room to converse with his God in silence and solitude, and to unite his will perfectly to the

Divine will. Suddenly, a wild wail of lamentation arose outside ; the deacon Serapion entered with a face convulsed by emotion, and falling in tears at the feet of the Patriarch, said, with a broken voice—“ Oh, my father, the sorrow of the people tells you what has happened. An officer has come from the Emperor, to”—Serapion could not finish the sentence.

“ To give me my liberty,” added Chrysostom. “ Well, then, we will receive him as befits the bearer of a great favour.”

A great number of priests followed Serapion ; they gathered round the Patriarch, and the people were with difficulty hindered from forcing their way into the palace ; they surrounded the terrified messenger like a surging sea. Serapion soon appeared among the agitated crowds, to conduct him to the hall where Chrysostom, surrounded by priests and bishops, awaited his coming. He read the sentence, which the Patriarch heard with an unmoved countenance, replying that he could only obey a lawful Council, and that the command of the Emperor had not the power of separating him from his flock. The officer withdrew, and immediately a band of Prætorians appeared, who conducted the Patriarch, with perfect respect, through the crowds—silent now through the very intensity of their grief—to the harbour, and on board a vessel which soon bore him beyond the reach of their longing eyes. What would become of him ? whither were they taking him ? There came no answer to these questions of grief and uncertainty : and the soft purple shades of evening settled silently over the waters of the Bosphorus.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## AN EARTHQUAKE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

Never, except on the day which saw her proclaimed Augusta, had Eudoxia seen the sun set with a prouder heart than now. Both were days of triumph for her: the one over the good, the other over the evil, which, each in its own way, was an obstacle in her path. Chrysostom was now deposed: and it had been done in so gentle, so forbearing a manner, that she was almost inclined to give herself credit for having performed a good work in removing the weakly, infirm, man from the attacks of his enemies, and in restoring him to the peaceful retirement which had so many charms for him. In this way, too, she had quieted the Emperor's conscience. Euphraphia and Marsa were by no means satisfied with these half measures; in their opinion deposition and banishment ought to go together—there could be no danger of his re-instatement being discussed, if once the Golden-mouth were silent in the deserts of Lybia or the Caucasus! The discontent of her advisers was an additional satisfaction to the Empress: was it not an acknowledgment of her clemency?

The Empress sent for Gunilda immediately on her

return from Olympias ; she was in a very gracious mood, and talked of the quiet way in which all the vexed questions which had been so long discussed were now set at rest ; she commended the wisdom of Bishop Severian, the piety of Arsacius, the good judgment of the Emperor ; and then, when she hoped that she had succeeded in overpowering, if not in convincing Gunilda, she inquired what she had heard of the day's events.

“ Only grief and lamentation,” was the answer.

“ How unreasonable !” exclaimed Eudoxia : “ but you ? —you have more sense ?” Gunilda bent her head in silence. “ Does that mean consent ?” asked the Empress.

“ It means that I crave permission to be silent.”

“ Ungrateful !—to distress me—unreasonable ! to mistake me in this way,” cried Eudoxia impetuously. “ I should like to know what ideas you have about me in that obstinate head of yours. Speak !”

“ I can only think of those words of our Lord, when His enemies apprehended Him—‘ this is your hour, and the power of darkness.’ ”

“ You compare me, then, to the murderers of our Saviour ?” said Eudoxia with a bitter laugh : I should be sorry to detain you in such bad company ; you may retire.” “ Am I never to know one day of unmixed satisfaction ?” she asked herself, when she was alone. “ Must there always be a hand to drop gall into the cup from which I am hoping for refreshment ? That foolish Gunilda . . . . as if I could be in the power of evil spirits . . . . acting under their influence . . . . I, who control all the influences around me, both good and bad !” And even as she spoke she seemed

to hear a voice in her heart asking: “all? even those within you?” She was alone, and she could not answer that voice untruly: “but who,” she said, “is there in the world, who could answer yes, to such a question?”

It had grown late; Eudoxia longed for a little comfort before retiring for the night, and she turned her steps towards the apartments of her children, lingering by her little four-year old son, longer still by his elder sister Pulcheria, the flower of the family, who inherited both the personal beauty and the mental endowments of the great Theodosius. She sighed as she bent over her eldest-born Flaccilla, whose delicate health was a constant anxiety, and smiled again as she watched the rosy sleep of the two little ones, Arcadia and Marina. In those few moments ambition, self-interest, worldly schemes, all were forgotten in a mother’s tenderness. When she had returned to her apartment, and was about to summon her attendants, a strange sudden noise was heard, like the howling of the wind and the roll of thunder. She stood listening in terrified astonishment, and soon she perceived an unsteady wavering motion of the ground beneath her feet: and then the rolling howling noise began for the second time. “An earthquake!” she cried in alarm, and the next moment her terrified women rushed in shrieking, “An earthquake! save yourself! let us leave the city! . . . . it is God’s judgment upon it!”

“Be silent, and compose yourselves!” said the Empress authoritatively: “the Emperor will say what is to be done.” She passed from the room: in the outer apartments she found groups of terrified helpless attend-

ants, but the universal panic seemed to give her composure, and she said calmly : “there is no cause for all this extreme terror : it was a passing shock, not an earthquake.”

But even as she spoke the rumbling noise and the shaking of the ground recommenced. Arcadius entered, pale as death, and clasping Eudoxia in his arms, exclaimed, “The children!—we must place them in safety!” “Where is there safety in an earthquake?” she whispered in his ear. Again that awful noise!—yet no! this time it was something different—a wild confusion of voices rising and falling like the angry waves of the sea. The whole of the imperial household came thronging round the Emperor and the Empress. Messengers were arriving with terrible news: the Hebdomon had fallen—a fire was raging at the harbour—the Bosphorus was rising, and threatening to submerge the lower part of the city . . . . the people were desperate.

The arrival of Optatus, the Prefect of Constantinople, put a stop to false reports, but he brought a true one which was equally serious. The people were in uncontrollable excitement; roused from their sullen grief at the loss of the Patriarch by the earthquake, they saw in it a divine chastisement. Already, down at the harbour, there had been a fight with the Egyptian sailors, the countrymen and partisans of Theophilus, in which blood had been spilt and lives lost, and to stop which it had been necessary to call in the Prætorians. Now, the huge, fierce mass of angry men was advancing to the palace of Constantine: what was to be done? must the guards again be sent for to drown their murmurs in their blood?

Optatus was still making his report when the surging sound of the multitude was heard close to the outer court of the palace: and now the furious voices rose high and loud, calling for Chrysostom, and threatening Eudoxia with the divine vengeance. “Eudoxia hates him! Eudoxia drove him away! Eudoxia has brought the earthquake on us! Give us back our holy father, Cæsar Augustus! Recall him, and Heaven will bless you and your children . . . . God’s curse upon Eudoxia.”

The Empress’ courage had stood the test of all the earthquake *alone*: but now that the tumult of the populace, and the meaning that they gave to the convulsion of nature were added, it was more than she could face. Her conscience refused to be silenced now: she dared not send the Prætorians against the people; and she was forced to acknowledge that there was but one way of escape from all these perplexities and disturbances, and that way was, her own humiliation. Weeping passionately, she fell at the Emperor’s feet, and conjured him in the name of the public safety and of his own, to recall the Patriarch, as earnestly and vehemently as if poor Arcadius were not only too willing to grant her request. No sooner had his consent been spoken, than it spread with lightning-speed through the palace, the streets and squares. Good wishes and blessings were invoked on the great, the wise, the pious Augusta, and she, impetuous and impulsive as ever, became at once full of enthusiastic sympathy for the people whom with one word she had inspired with such devotion to herself. She wrote to Chrysostom with her own hand, expressing her great joy in

the Emperor's resolution to reverse his sentence, and the pleasure it gave her to send him the good tidings.

But where was he? Orders had been given that he was to be put ashore on the coast of Bythynia, which had been done, and the vessel had continued her course to Nicomedia for which port she was bound. Serapion's sister and her husband resided in a bright-looking villa charmingly situated on the little bay of Nicomedia: and Chrysostom knew of this, but he did not know the situation of the house, and he was personally unacquainted with Charito and her husband. He stood alone on the shore beneath the star-spangled sky, while the white sails of the ship bore her swiftly across the bay, leaving behind her a gleaming silvery track, as she cut her way through the dark waves. Not far from where he stood, a group of plane trees promised some shelter from the keen night air, and he went towards them. There he saw that the trees grew at the foot of a gentle prettily planted slope, which showed that some villa was near. He soon reached it, and knocked at the door. On being asked who it was who craved admission at so late an hour, he answered that he was a pilgrim who begged a night's lodging. Then the door was opened: but no sooner did the porter see the face of the stranger as the light of his torch fell full upon it, than he sank on his knees, exclaiming in a voice of terror: "Holy Father!—what has happened?—whence do you come?"

"If you will take me in for the night, I shall be very grateful," said the Patriarch.

"O, not I, but my master and mistress will be glad indeed to have you for their guest. Your Holiness is in the

house of the deacon Serapion's sister—I once saw you at Constantinople, where she had sent me with a message to him."

Charito and her husband welcomed the Patriarch with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow. He could only tell them very briefly the events which had made him a homeless exile, for he was quite exhausted, and Charito attended to his wants with the affectionate care of a daughter. Then night came, and all was quiet in the peaceful Christian home. Early in the morning Briso, a chamberlain of the Empress, and the one to whose charge she had entrusted her letter, came, and inquired for the Patriarch. The porter, suspecting treachery, gave an evasive answer: then Briso desired to speak to his master, and the truth soon came out. Chrysostom read the letter with wondering sorrow, but he could only comply with its requests. Swift rowers bore to Constantinople the tidings that he was found, that he was on his way. The whole city was mad with joy. Bishop Severian had, somewhat precipitately, left Chalcedon, and was explaining in vehement language, from the pulpit of Sta. Sophia, how the Patriarch had incurred the sentence of deposition by his pride and arrogance. But he was not suffered to proceed: with passionate indignation the faithful interrupted his discourse—they cried aloud to God to restore their Patriarch to them: and when at length the joyful news of his approach was known, the vast Church was emptied in a moment. All rushed to meet him—the Bosphorus was alive with boats; indeed, at the point where its waters join the Propontis they were so thick, that one might almost have passed dry-shod from Europe to Asia.

A deafening shout of joy arose when the small bent figure, the delicate pale face, came in sight. They wanted to bear him in triumph into the city ; but Chrysostom would not seem to resume his place by means of a popular tumult. He landed in the grounds of a villa belonging to the Empress, and at once demanded a legitimate Council to smooth all perplexities. Arcadius immediately dispatched a private secretary to the villa with the promise that it should be so, and with an entreaty that he would no longer delay his return, as otherwise the good faith of the Emperor might be called in question. Meanwhile, the foreign bishops had joined him. Accompanied by them, surrounded by rejoicing crowds bearing lighted tapers and singing hymns of joy, the Patriarch entered the Church of the Apostles and gave his blessing to the multitude. But they would not part with him so soon, he must speak to them : they would sooner hear his beloved voice than go to the games of the circus which were being exhibited in honour of the occasion.

“Thanks be to God for all things !” he said : “those were my words at parting from you, they are my words now, on returning to you. There are many changing events in life, but they are all ordered or permitted by God. Therefore, with an unshaken tranquillity, we should thank Him for every instance of His Divine Providence. See, how good He is to us : the enemies who sought to harm us have done us service : our zeal is strengthened, our charity inflamed. Men sought to part me from my flock—they do but cling to me more closely : games are going on in the circus—but instead of hastening to them, all crowd to the churches. Is not this the hand

of God, turning the machinations of men to the honour of His poor servant? Raise your hearts, your voices, in thanksgiving to Him: the holy Apostles, in whose church we stand, teach us that they who bear the Cross here will earn a crown in Heaven."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## A MOMENT OF PEACE.

Eudoxia was radiant with joy—a joy which was reflected in the Emperor. The whole court followed their example, with the exception of Chrysostom's declared enemies. They held aloof—and waited: Euphemia, Marsa, and Eugenius were of the number.

“I feel as if I had awakened from a bad dream,” said the Empress to Amantius, “and I am afraid that while I was under its influence, I was not just either to you or Gunilda, and yet I know how faithful you both are to me, and how sincerely you are attached to me. But I was not myself—I was incapable of judging.”

“You are so kind and gracious,” answered Amantius, “that I cannot help asking whether it is sufficient excuse for a Christian, for the ruler of half the world—to plead having been blinded by prejudice and passion, and having acted under such influences?”

“Perhaps not—but I have no better,” said Eudoxia, smiling. “And now, go to the Patriarch, and tell him that I have wept bitter tears over his exile and the orphanhood of the Church, and that all is well with me now that the good shepherd is restored to his flock.”

Eudoxia, with the constant changes, the ever-varying tints of her character, was an incomprehensible riddle to the straightforward simplicity of Gunilda: she could not help feeling a sort of compassion for such moral weakness, but respect was impossible, beyond that which was due to Eudoxia's station. Her own position was not satisfactory, yet she could not see clearly how to change it. For marriage she felt no attraction, though the Empress had proposed to her more than one brilliant alliance. She would answer evasively, "I do not like the saying, 'he shall have dominion over thee.'" She liked quite as little the idea of having herself the dominion in marriage: only, of course, it would have been to the last degree *gauche* to express such a sentiment before the Empress. It was Eudoxia's belief that, immediately after her baptism, Gunilda would join some religious community, and dedicate herself to God either in the contemplative life with Nicarete, or in the active with Olympias: unless, indeed, she followed the example of many pious and thoughtful spirits by retiring to a convent in the Holy Land. But Gunilda had no plans for the future. "When I am cleansed from my sins in the Sacrament of Baptism, and have received the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity into my soul, then I hope that my eyes will be enlightened to see clearly in what way my Saviour would have me serve Him." So she spoke to the Empress and Olympias, and both approved of her resolution.

Now that Eudoxia was so favourably disposed towards the Patriarch, Gunilda ventured, as Amantius had done, on some gentle remonstrances as to the influence of his

enemies. “I do not speak merely on his account,” she said, “although it is a crying shame for such a shepherd to be hindered and thwarted in the care of his flock,—but on yours also, illustrious Augusta, for you are brought into contact with persons of the basest minds . . . . with a creature like Eugenius, who ought not to be so much as named before you.”

“There is much truth in what you say, Gunilda . . . . only it is so difficult to decide accurately between conflicting claims, especially when one is naturally inclined to side with a party.”

“Is that like a sovereign?” asked Gunilda, gently.

“I do not know; but it is like a human being,” answered Eudoxia. “As to Eugenius, I should be glad enough to send him away from Constantinople, to some very strict monastery—but I do so pity poor Euphemia! She loves him as if he were her own son, and hopes the best for him still, and she is so devoted to the imperial interest, and to me personally, that I cannot make up my mind to give her this pain: but I am quite resolved to hold no further communication with him.”

The Emperor was honestly desirous of a lasting reconciliation with Chrysostom: he proposed to the Empress to be present at the discourse which the Patriarch was to deliver the next day, in the Church of the Apostles: it would delight the people, it was due to the Patriarch, it would gratify his friends, the foreign bishops; and lastly it would convince Theophilus of the failure of his schemes. Eudoxia consented willingly: she always took great pains to produce an impression of piety on the people, and she desired to live hereafter in her children’s

memory, crowned with the aureole of sanctity which Flaccilla wore in the eyes of hers. Only there was this difference: Flaccilla's whole life and character were penetrated with the spirit of religion—Eudoxia's piety was worn on great occasions, like a costly *parure* of diamonds. The imperial pair, then, made their appearance in the Church of the Apostles. There was a strong feeling prevalent against the Court: on all sides were heard tales of its pomp and luxury, its avarice and injustice, its intrigues and bribery; but no honourable actions were spoken of, no works for the good of the people or the dignity of the Empire. All who had any feeling for higher and better things were ranged on the side of Chrysostom: they thought that in time his pure and noble influence must triumph over the sordid and the base; and the lower classes, the mass of the people, saw in him a loving father, who cherished all his children alike, high and low, rich and poor. They attributed his deposition to the cabals of the nobility, and they looked with an eye of suspicion on the court and all its adherents.

The Patriarch, ever anxious to promote peace, alluded to the recent events only in order to magnify the gracious conduct of the Emperor and Empress; he dwelt particularly on the sympathy of the latter, because she was the one from whom it was least expected. He described her efforts to find him; her affectionate letter; the gracious message she had sent him by Amantius. And the people—always easily excited, and just now full of the happiness of hearing the voice of their beloved Patriarch once more—broke out into a regular frenzy of enthusiasm for

their glorious and pious Augusta. Eudoxia was radiant; but the only use Chrysostom made of the gracious disposition of the Emperor and Empress was to request the former to summon a lawful Council to inquire into the charges against him: a request with which Arcadius readily promised compliance.

News of all this was brought by Florus to Chalcedon. Theophilus was furious; "and all this important business is ruined by the miserable caprice of a woman!" he exclaimed.

"Patience, venerable father," answered Florus; "there is no other remedy. We must be prepared to recommence our work, as the spider does her web, however often it is destroyed."

Theophilus resolved to return to Alexandria that very night. "Commend me," he said, "to the illustrious Euphraphia; she will see that, as I cannot appear at court, under present circumstances, it is impossible for me to pay my respects to her. You, or she, or some of those who share our sentiments on the subject, may, perhaps, manage to get hold of one of the threads of the broken web, which may be spun into a fresh one at this new Council. This you must see to: I shall be ready when the time comes."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## THE SILVER STATUE.

Eudoxia was in her apartments, surrounded by her usual circle. "Glorious Augusta," said Thais, "I hear that your silver statue is finished, and that it is such a beauty! Do tell us when and where it is to be erected."

"Very soon," answered the Empress, "and in the great square between Sta. Sophia and the Senate-house. It is to stand on a magnificent porphyry pillar, which I have had brought from Alexandria, where it used to be at the entrance of the temple of Serapis."

"Oh, what a charming idea!" cried Thais, "the god making way for the goddess!"

"And a beautiful symbol of your conquests over the idols of polytheism," added Castricia.

"I like the situation so much," observed Marsa, "just in the centre of the business part of the city, and its most important interests. In the senate-house worldly matters are treated of, in the church heavenly ones; and our Augusta's statue represents her vigilant care for both."

"How fortunate we are in possessing such an Empress!" cried Eugraphia in an irresistible outburst of enthusiasm,

“I have given orders,” said Eudoxia, “that the games and spectacles usual on such occasions shall be celebrated with threefold splendour at the inauguration of this statue. The Cæsar Augustus was extremely displeased by the way in which the Emperor Honorius expressed himself about my statues being sent into the provinces: he presumed to say that such honours were only due to an Emperor; and for this reason, the ceremony on this occasion is to exceed everything that has ever been seen of the kind.”

“Cruel Emperor Honorius!” cried pretty, silly Thais, “to grudge the provinces the pride and pleasure of doing honour to their Empress!”

“The good people of Constantinople deserve this at my hands,” the Empress went on: “they are so loyal, so devoted to me, that I feel bound to give them just the kind of amusement that they will most enjoy.”

“How did the report get wind that the Patriarch has forbidden these festivities?” Castricia asked.

“As you have just heard that the Augusta has ordered them,” said Eugraphia, “I wonder you should trouble yourself about such a ridiculous rumour.”

“That is just why I asked,” answered Castricia, “for the report is spoken of on all sides.”

“And what is it they say?” asked Eudoxia in a tone of annoyance.

“That the Patriarch considers these amusements unbecoming a Christian people, and that he wants them done away with,” Castricia answered.

“Exactly what I heard,” said Marsa carelessly, “but I did not attach the least importance to the rumour; his

ascetic turn of mind is so well known, that it is not to be wondered at if it give rise to absurdly exaggerated reports."

"But it is vexatious in the extreme," said Eudoxia, now thoroughly put out, "that absurd or not, the point or colouring, or whatever you like to call it, of these reports invariably tells against me."

"I am sure I should not trouble myself about them, if I were Empress," cried Thais naively; "one does not expect the notions of an old, pious, sickly priest to agree with those of our young, beautiful, irresistible Augusta."

"Let him keep his notions to himself, then," said Eudoxia, impatiently.

"Certainly it would be more becoming in him," returned Thais.

"After all, we may be doing him injustice," said the Empress, more gently. "It is a mere report—it does not do to listen to common gossip."

"But it ought to be inquired into, so that we may be able to contradict it," observed Euphraphia.

"Exactly! and I trust to you to trace the report to its source; when I know that I shall know everything."

Chrysostom was the one solitary person of whom the Empress stood in awe. Rightly or wrongly, she felt superior to every one else, and treated them accordingly. With him it was different. She wished to feel towards him, and to behave to him, as she did to the rest of the world, but she could not. However she might speak or act, she could not rid herself of a feeling of inferiority when she thought of herself as compared with the Patri-

arch. He was a thorn in her side, incessantly wounding and irritating her pride. If she was on good terms with him she consoled herself with the thought that there was no humiliation in a feeling of inferiority to so saintly a man ; if, on the contrary, she was displeased with him, the very presence of a man who would not submit slavishly to her will, was intolerable to her. Latterly things had gone on very smoothly : so far as it was possible Chrysostom had most carefully avoided giving her any offence either by word or deed. She, in her vanity and weakness, imagined that by recalling him to the patriarchal throne she had won him to her side. The wise forbearance, which he exercised principally for the peace of the Church, she took for gratitude to herself, though in her heart she knew that it was she who owed him gratitude for averting the anger of the people from her. She might have endured this in tranquil times, although, to a character like hers, a sense of obligation is always painful ; but in times of tumult and disorder the burden was intolerable, and if she had no other reason for desiring the removal of the Patriarch than not to be reminded by his very presence of all she owed him, that reason would have been enough for Eudoxia.

The Empress had forbidden Euphemia to send Eugenius with messages to her, on Gunilda's account ; it was Florus, therefore, who was the bearer of the information she had desired to have concerning the report which had so much displeased her. Eudoxia knew the character of Euphemia's messenger perfectly ; but he was a useful tool, and it would not do to look too closely. Still, there was some sharpness in her voice as she asked,

“ Well, is it discovered whether the report took its rise under an oak or under a plane tree ?”

“ I have only been ordered to tell you, most illustrious Augusta, that it is no mere report, but an ascertained fact.”

“ Prove it,” was all her reply.

“ The Patriarch went himself to Optatus, to request him, by his authority as prefect of the city, to oppose the games, which he designated as ‘ heathenish abominations.’ The thing is certain : everything seemed to point to the palace of the prefect as the origin of the rumour ; still, it appeared so very unlikely, that the illustrious Eugraphia sent me to Optatus to inquire into the affair, and he gave me the simple explanation which I have just had the honour of repeating in this exalted presence. Optatus added that he refused the Patriarch’s request on the strength of your commands, great Augusta ; and also that he had not mentioned the circumstance for fear of exciting discontent among the people, who are wild after this kind of amusement.”

“ Optatus has acted very sensibly,” said Eudoxia, controlling her anger by a strong effort. “ Go and tell him that I will double the sum which I originally intended to be spent ; and I expect the splendour of the spectacles to be in proportion.”

“ He will be delighted with your gracious message, and will not fail to point out the munificence of the Augusta to the people.”

“ And tell him, further, that I desire him to hasten the preparations for the inauguration of the statue. It is a most valuable work of art, which will be a lasting ornament to the city.”

She dismissed Florus, and remained alone, to think with indignation on the conduct of Chrysostom, whom she regarded as guilty of high treason, and of conspiring with Honorius to humiliate her in the eyes of the whole world. In reality, the Patriarch had simply requested Optatus to prevent the games being celebrated on any feast of the Church, and before the entrance of Sta. Sophia, matters—both of them—entirely in the province of the Prefect, and which in no way touched the Empress. Chrysostom had spoken in the strictest confidence, in order not to give rise to any suspicions ; but Optatus—a secret ally of Euphemia's—lost no time in communicating the circumstance to her, and it was from her that the report originated on which Florus had thrown so strong and so false a light in his interview with Eudoxia. She hastened to the Emperor, full of complaints of the Patriarch's feigned loyalty and secret machinations to humiliate her—of the insult offered to the imperial dignity—of his understanding with Honorius, and consequently, with Stilicho and Serena—of her own misfortune in having to endure the presence of so bitter an enemy of her credit, her happiness, and her peace, winding up by declaring passionately that as long as Chrysostom remained on the patriarchal throne, there would be no rest for her or for the city, with which conclusion Arcadius readily agreed. The result was that the avowed enemies of Chrysostom were again summoned to the Council for which he had petitioned. Meanwhile, the inauguration of the statue took place on a scale of unprecedented magnificence. Dancers in the richest attire moved in measured and graceful movements

round the pillar, mingled with minstrels singing hymns in honour of the “divine Augusta,” as was the phrase in heathen times, but one scarcely to be expected in those of a Christian Emperor. Then followed more objectional performances. Coarse buffooneries, plays and dances which outraged modesty, succeeded one another till the people were half wild with the excitement of unbridled license, which the tables and drinking-booths increased to a still higher pitch. For three days and nights these orgies lasted ; there was no pause in the dance and song, the low jest, the coarse revelry. And this was in honour of a Christian Empress, and in the immediate neighbourhood of the cathedral of the city. The mad tumult disturbed the divine offices and the prayers of the faithful. Many who lacked courage to make their way through the noisy Babel were kept from church ; and, worse still, many yielded to temptation, and mixed with the riot around them.

On one of these days Chrysostom preached from the pulpit ; thousands of voices might allure to evil, one at least should be raised against it. He spoke of the utter vanity and nothingness of such scenes, and of the fearful risk of offending God which all incurred who were present at them. Then with a holy boldness, he condemned the lavish expenditure which such entertainments entailed.

Eugraphia and Marsa were eager to tell the Empress of the joy and gratitude of the people ; and the latter added with marked emphasis, “Now, great Augusta, that the people are all enthusiasm for their Empress, now is the time to take a decided step.”

“In what way ?” asked Eudoxia ; “I ask nothing of my good people except to be loyal and obedient.”

“As they will be,” said Marsa, “if they are not constantly goaded in a contrary direction.”

Eudoxia’s smooth forehead contracted as she asked, “What ! has anything fresh occurred ?”

“The very worst that can be imagined.”

“I do not ask—I need not ask—*who* has spoken against me ; but what has been said ?” asked the Empress authoratively.

“I cannot answer you ; my lips refuse to do so.” answered Marsa.

“I will know,” insisted Eudoxia.

“Do you speak, then,” said Marsa to Eugraphia ; “I can find no words.”

“Answer !” and Eudoxia turned to Eugraphia, trembling with excitement ; “what did he say ? I am prepared for anything.”

“He said—said from the pulpit of Sta. Sophia, in his fanatical fury against the spectacles and shows going on in the square—‘Herodias dances, and asks for the head of John.’”

“Well,” said Eudoxia, with a puzzled air, “that is only a quotation from the Sacred Scriptures ; I really can see nothing offensive in that. I don’t even see your meaning.”

“No, great Augusta ; because your goodness and generosity are so surprising,” said Eugraphia admiringly.

“Of course such a thing *might* be said merely as an instance of great crimes following unrestrained gratification of the eyes. But he enlarged upon the example in

such a manner that his hearers—and they numbered thousands—received one and all the same impression of his meaning: namely, that a new Herodias had bewitched the Emperor and the people, so as to make sure of universal support when she should demand the head of another John."

"So widely spread is this impression," added Marsa, "that the very children in the streets—the very slaves at the spinning-wheel, are singing of 'Herodias and John'; and if any one asks their meaning, and they are quite sure of not being betrayed, they whisper the exalted name of the illustrious Augusta."

"The measure is full!" exclaimed Eugraphia; "such audacity was never heard of from a Patriarch to an Empress."

"Yes, it is full?" repeated Eudoxia, with the calmness of concentrated passion; "now, when the time for action comes, the blow shall be struck once for all." She was bent on raising Severian to the patriarchal throne; but the ladies, greatly as they admired his eloquence and his graceful *savoir faire*, declared that such an appointment would give general dissatisfaction. Severian was a foreigner—a native of an insignificant Syrian town, and a perfect stranger to the people of Constantinople, though popular at court. It was to be feared that the clergy might take offence at the Patriarch not being chosen from their own body; nay, they would consider that the dignity was due to one individual, the aged arch-priest Arsacius, who had been so slightly passed over by Eutropius at the time of Chrysostom's election. All these arguments secretly irritated the Empress, who

could bear opposition from neither friend nor foe ; but by way of smoothing difficulties, and in consideration of his eighty years, she reconciled herself to the appointments of Arsacius as the immediate successor of Chrysostom.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE DECISIVE BLOW.

A great number of bishops had answered the summons of the Emperor to examine whether Chrysostom was guilty of any act justifying his deposition. Theophilus, dreading a second humiliation, did not appear this time, but sent other bishops to represent him, whom he had been careful to imbue with his own bitter feelings. And still, in spite of all, it seemed that Chrysostom's friends outnumbered his enemies..

Now Eudoxia struck the decisive blow. It was Holy Week, in the year 404. It had always been the Emperor's custom to hear Mass on Easter Day at Sta. Sophia, where the Patriarch celebrated. He now sent word that he did not intend doing so this year, as it was unbecoming for the Emperor to continue in communion with a bishop already deposed and lying under serious accusations. This was the signal for open hostility. The declaration of the Emperor alarmed the weak and wavering, and more than one bishop who had hitherto ranged himself on the side of the Patriarch became a deserter. The times of the Emperor Valens were not so long past but that many remembered how bishops and priests had been

persecuted and banished ; and who could say that such scenes were not impending now ? People no longer made a secret of the Empress' determination to depose the Patriarch, and those who wished to stand well with her must be submissive to her, and of what avail—so argued the cowardly and ungenerous—could the influence of any individual be in the matter ? To oppose the Augusta would be to bring down her anger on the head of the offender without doing any good to the cause of Chrysostom. Nay, even pious and highminded men were entangled in the net of falsehood, intrigue, and misrepresentation which surrounded them, and unable to distinguish where the truth lay. Forty-two bishops stood firm, but the majority were carried away by the vehemence of the Patriarch's opponents, confirming the sentence of deposition and signified their assent to the Emperor, with the request that he would condescend to make it public.

Arcadius complied. He knew that Chrysostom was innocent of all offence ; he knew that his deposition was hurried on because his enemies despaired of finding the least stain on his character ; but it was Eudoxia's will—and that was law to Arcadius. Now he had taken the final step—and he trembled at it. "Clemency is the crown of power," said Bishop Severian, "but firmness in maintaining the right is its foundation ; and the foundation is more necessary than the crown. Vouchsafe, most illustrious Augustus, to command the removal of the deposed and condemned Chrysostom from his cathedral, and from the imperial city."

"Nothing short of this will be the execution of the

sentence," urged the bishop of Ptolemais, "and to delay it, pious Augustus, would be to cast a slur on the Council of 'the Oak.'"

"Another consideration," urged Arcadius, the bishop of Beræa, "is that the people here are in a state of increasing excitement, some for, others against Chrysostom; and it would take very little to bring on a regular riot."

"Besides," said Eudoxia, "it would be as bad to leave the flock without a shepherd as under a faithless one."

"All that you say, venerable Fathers, is true in itself, and worthy of consideration," answered the Emperor; "and yet——my conscience refuses to see that it is the proper course in the present instance."

"The matter has been tried, and the decision given by lawful and competent judges; what more could the tenderest conscience require?" asked Severian.

"And surely to submit one's individual conscience to the laws is a magnanimous act," said the bishop of Ptolemais.

"But the case is one of such exceptional importance," replied the Emperor, "both on account of the exalted dignity of the Patriarch, as first after the Successor of St. Peter, and in consideration of the virtues he has displayed for fifty years, and which cause him to be regarded as a saint by the faithful, so that the greater caution is necessary."

"Do you exclude us from the body of the faithful, my dear lord?" Eudoxia asked, with her winning smile; "because we do not regard him as a saint?"

"Of course, I did not mean that," returned Arcadius,

with some confusion ; “but this sort of thing is sure to cause scandal, and to be a bad precedent.”

“We will take all the consequences on ourselves, invincible Augustus,” said Severian.

All the other bishops said the same : and Eudoxia whispered, “And now, dearest lord, your conscience is surely at rest.”

“At all events, I cannot take upon myself to oppose the decision of these venerable fathers any longer. I cannot say that I am fully convinced, but—I yield.”

The victory was won : Arcadius commanded the Patriarch to leave Sta. Sophia immediately, and the city itself before Easter. The Patriarch replied that the Church had been committed to his charge by God, that he might work in it for the salvation of souls, and that he would not leave it ; as to the city, that belonged to the Emperor, and if he objected to his presence there; it was, of course, in his power to drive him out. Still, Arcadius hesitated ; still, according to his wont, he had recourse to half measures. He ordered a centurion of the body-guard to watch the patriarchal palace, so that Chrysostom could not enter the church. In the city the greatest excitement prevailed : the faithful saw that there was an organised plan to tear their beloved Patriarch from them, and at such a time too !—on the feast of Easter, when he was to admit three thousand catechumens to the sacrament of baptism ! Grief and indignation filled their hearts ; surely it could not be that wickedness would be suffered to triumph—the churches were crowded with worshippers praying with tears to the Eternal Justice not to abandon His persecuted servant.

So passed the first few days of Holy Week. Good Friday came, and the Emperor and Empress went to the Church of the Holy Martyrs. There were assembled the forty-two bishops who had kept their faith to the Patriarch and to the truth. On that solemn day, and in that sacred spot, they had determined to make a last effort publicly, before all the people, to hinder a great and terrible crime. The news had got abroad, and thousands flocked to the church. When Arcadius and Eudoxia arrived, they found the vestibule and the portico surrounding it filled to overflowing with crowds, not greeting them with glad acclamations, but stretching out supplianting hands, and uttering bitter lamentations. They passed on, and before them stood the band of pious, venerable men, with the meek Elpidius of Laodicea as their spokesman, who entreated the Emperor to have pity on the Church—to restore the shepherd to his mourning flock—and not to desecrate the sanctity of the approaching festival by a fearful act of violence. Arcadius remained silent and distressed, while the Empress looked angry, and turned impatiently from the venerable speaker without vouchsafing a reply. Then Paul, the white-haired bishop of Pontus, stepped out from the ranks of his brethren, and coming close to her, said in a tone of impressive earnestness, “Fear God, and have compassion on your children; injustice brings no blessing!”

But she turned from him angrily and passed on silently, and without greeting; the Emperor followed her. Full of grief and anxiety the bishops withdrew; full of painful expectation the crowds dispersed. Eudoxia returned

from the church disturbed and irritable, her heart filled with gall and bitterness ; and it was in no calm state of mind that she received Gunilda, who just then appeared and requested an audience. "How pale you look!" said Eudoxia ; "you must be ill ; you had better go and lie down."

"I am quite well," answered Gunilda, "and I am come for the last time into the presence of the illustrious Augusta."

"How so?" asked the Empress ; "do you intend to enter a convent immediately after your baptism?"

"Certainly not without trying my vocation."

"Where, then, are you going, Gunilda?"

"To the deaconess Olympias, noble Eudoxia."

"To that blind adherent of Chrysostom?"

Gunilda bent her head.

"Then you are taking a step which is both ungrateful and disrespectful to me!" said the Empress, passionately. "You know how I have longed to see you a Christian, and now that the day has come, you leave me ; me, who have been a friend—a mother—to you for years : who have cared for you, and loved you, yes, and borne with you, too—and you leave me for a stranger! If you were going into religion I could understand it, and I should acquiesce gladly in your following your vocation ; but I will not acquiesce in your going without any cause—and to Olympias."

"There is a cause—a pressing one," said Gunilda, with some embarrassment.

"Gratitude ought to be more pressing still," Eudoxia answered.

“ Impossible!” exclaimed Gunilda. “ You know that I can do nothing by halves—where my heart is I must be; and my heart belongs to the Church, to that Church which John Chrysostom rules in the name of Jesus Christ. With that Church I will remain; with her children I will abide. Therefore, noble Eudoxia, I must leave you for her; in the imperial palace the patriarchal authority is no longer recognised.”

“ And who has revealed to you that his authority is a legitimate one?” asked Eudoxia, sarcastically.

“ His enemies, lady.”

“ Poor child! what nonsense you are talking,” said the Empress, contemptuously.

“ It was an unworthy priest,” Gunilda replied, calmly, “ who opened the door of the Church to me. I thought that Church must be of divine origin which was not ruined by such servants. Now I see priests, some like the one I speak of, others, not, indeed, like him, but utterly worldly, coming forward as bitter enemies of the Patriarch; and I believe that he, like the Church, stands on a rock which cannot be moved. And therefore I will be true to him, like Olympias, like Amantius, like the forty-two brave bishops, like the good and pious among the clergy, and like the great body of the faithful.”

“ But Amantius does not leave me on that account; the clergy and the people do not rebel against me and the Emperor on that account!” exclaimed Eudoxia.

“ Neither do I,” answered Gunilda; “ you asked me a question, great Augusta, and I have answered it. As to Amantius, he has grown grey in Christianity, and can

stand firm by himself ; my faith is young, and I dare not risk it where the sin of schism is threatening."

" And this sin rests, according to you, with the Empress ?" asked Eudoxia.

" That is only known to Him who sees in secret ; I accuse no one—the kingdom of the world is always at war with the kingdom of God."

" Go !" said Eudoxia, in passionate excitement. " I will not endure this from you—you who owe everything to me ! Go to my enemies—you are your father's true daughter ! I might banish you from my presence ! Go ; and I will try to forget that your black ingratitude has so darkened the moment for which I have longed and prayed for years, that it must be for ever associated with pain and bitterness."

" No, oh, no !" and Gunilda fell weeping at Eudoxia's feet ; " I am not ungrateful, not utterly unworthy of your kindness. If by laying down my life I could alter things I would do it, my dearest mistress, so gladly ! But as things are, I must, I must keep true to that holy man whom God has set over the Church to which I belong."

" The Church remains the same whatever name the bishop may bear," said the Empress.

" Yes, in her doctrines and her sacraments ; but not in their interpretation and administration," Gunilda answered, without moving from her kneeling position.

" Is it the same thing whether the shepherd leads the flock into the pastures of eternal life, or whether he lets them wander in the wilderness of this world ?"

“ You will allow, I hope, that I am more likely than you to distinguish the qualities requisite in a Patriarch ? Chrysostom has been condemned by two councils ; my conscience is easy.”

“ So is mine,” said Gunilda, sorrowfully.

“ May you never repent this,” said Eudoxia coldly, and turning away ; but Gunilda clung to her dress—“ Oh ! let me thank you first, for all those years of kindness, forbearance, and love ; for every gentle word, for every tender look, for every mark of affection ! oh, let me thank you for imperial protection, for your motherly care !—”

“ Spare your words ; they are unmeaning when your actions contradict them.” She drew her dress away quickly, and left the room.

Gunilda rose, weeping bitterly, and went to her own apartments. Amantius was waiting for her. “ You have been taking leave ?” he said, with kind sympathy.

“ Oh, that is not the name for it !” she sobbed ; “ it was a sentence of banishment. What hard sacrifices the confession of the true faith demands ! If I had continued an Arian, I might have remained in the palace all my life, as the darling of the Empress ; but as a Christian I have no home except one given to me out of charity.”

“ Thank God,” answered Amantius, “ for thus likening you to Him who had no place to lay His head. To take up the cross is to accept a sacrifice, and that in a twofold sense—the sacrifice of the Incarnate God, and the sacrifice of the natural man. He was crucified for

you ; well, then, noble Gunilda, you must be crucified with Him."

She dried her eyes, and said—" You—so faithful—how can you remain here ?"

" Every one knows my firm adherence to the Patriarch, and my indifference to worldly considerations. No one would attempt to change my sentiments. And who knows what changes may be worked here in time ?"

" Ah, you have hope, then !" she exclaimed in surprise.

" Hope is a Christian virtue," returned Amantius smiling ; " she is the daughter of firm faith and of holy charity."

" But for whom do you hope ? for the Empress or for the Patriarch ?"

" I hope in the blood of martyrs," said Amantius.

" Well, then, we will die with him," she answered.

" Oh, not you, noble Gunilda ! your young life is not ripe for martyrdom," said Amantius, gently and sadly, " but everything is prepared for a terrible and decisive blow. The enemies of the Patriarch have introduced troops into the city, on whom they rely for putting down any uprising of the people. I believe that the time is come when our holy Patriarch may say as our Divine Lord said when entering upon His bitter passion, ' This is your hour, and the power of darkness.' That power will crush him ; but for you another hour draws near, a bright and blessed one. On the holy Easter night you will be born again in the waters of baptism, and on such an

infinite grace neither I nor any human being can give you fitting congratulations."

A beaming, beautiful smile chased away the clouds from Gunilda's sorrowful face ; "Yes," she said, "born again—bathed and cleansed in the Precious Blood of Jesus."

**CHAPTER XXXI.****HOLY SATURDAY.**

No feast of the early Church was kept so solemnly as that of Easter, the queen of festivals—the seal of the work of Redemption. In the lapse of time one of the principal solemnities of this sacred season, the baptism of the Catechumens, was no longer reserved for it : not this only, but all the ceremonies which are now performed on the morning of Holy Saturday (namely, the blessing of the fire, of the Paschal candle, and of the font), took place in the times of which we speak, in the Easter night.

At first, the Church was quite dark. All the candles were extinguished, and even the perpetual lights burned no longer before the altar. Was not Jesus lying in His Sepulchre ? was not the frightened guilty world wrapt in the shadow of death ? and the hearts of men, were they not trembling in anxious doubt and in the consciousness of sin ? All these feelings were expressed by the low monotone, in which, through the darkness, the penitential psalms were sung. But the gates of the grave are burst ; the fire of Charity is kindled—a candle, lit at the newly blessed fire outside the church, is borne in the

solemn procession, and greeted in glad humility with the threefold repetition of the words “The light of Christ!” The feeling of almost painful expectation is relieved; all breathe more freely.

The light of the world has not set: divine Love has conquered death, and henceforth will live and work behind material veils in this world of decay and death. Its symbol is the Paschal candle, it is lighted, it burns—and now bursts forth a hymn of triumphant praise, bidding all angels and all men join in singing the triumph of the Divine Charity. And what is the crowning work of that Divine Charity? Is it not that mysterious union of the Incarnate God with His cleansed and reconciled creatures, which is accomplished in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist? And, see! the Catechumens follow each other, in long lines, first the women, then the men, to the baptistery: sometimes there are thousands of them: after their baptism they receive the white robe of the neophytes, and the Bread of Life Everlasting. Such were the beautiful and solemn ceremonies which filled the Easter night; and then came the joy and the glory of Easter Day. This year, the devotion with which the faithful were expecting the festival was disturbed by painful feelings of anxiety. It was known that on the morning of Holy Saturday the Emperor had gone to Sta. Sophia, and finding the Patriarch there had sent him an order to withdraw, and that Chrysostom had refused. Then—and to what a pitch must the hatred and power of his enemies have risen, for such a thing to be possible—the Patriarch had been surrounded by certain persons of the Emperor’s suite and conducted to his palace.

Would he venture to perform the ceremonies of the night? and, if so, would he be allowed to do it without interruption?

Olympias, Procla, and Pentadia had succeeded in inspiring their catechumens with so deep a spirit of contrition and devotion, that they awaited the time in holy tranquillity, undisturbed by the alarming reports which had reached even them in their seclusion. “I am about to be a Christian,” Flora said,—“I cannot think of anything else.”

Gunilda half envied the quiet simple child, who was so entirely dead to the external world. Such a state was harder for her to attain. Even when one lives *in* the world, without being *of* it, it is nearly impossible to keep the soul free from its fetters and entanglements. Still they were but passing clouds that dimmed the sun of her joy, and with a strong will she turned from all the crowding recollections of her father, her people, and the Empress; and also from all thoughts of the dangers of the Church, and of her own desolate position. “I have always felt alone,” she said to herself, “alone and homeless, ever since I was capable of feeling: and if I am to be actually homeless, and lonely as to external circumstances also, the God of mercy will make it easier and easier for me to cling closer to Him, and to follow Him on the way which His love and wisdom has chosen for me.”

Eugenius profited by the general excitement in the city to form a plan for carrying off Gunilda. There would be no difficulty, in the present state of feeling, in occasioning a tumult on some pretense or other. The enemies of the Patriarch had succeeded in introducing

bodies of freshly levied Thracian soldiers into Constantinople, commanded by a general who shared their sentiments. His name was Lucius, and he was a friend of Eugenius, and ready to help him in his design. The time chosen for its accomplishment was the night of Holy Saturday. Eugenius had been urgent with his uncle, the aged Arsacius, to put the finishing stroke to matters, and so to end this unnatural state of things, in which a deposed Patriarch still occupied the chair of his cathedral, and which would infallibly result in a scandalous schism. This audacious Chrysostom set the Emperor at defiance, and openly gave out that force alone should tear him from his church—therefore force must be used, and he must be taken away from the city as soon as possible.

“All very well; but where is he to be taken? has the Augusta decided that point?” asked Arsacius.

“From what I hear, he is to be banished to Lesser Armenia.”

“To the foot of Mount Taurus?—on my word, a dreary abode!”

“Oh, no,” sneered Eugenius, “not for such a lover of the ascetic life; he will find plenty of opportunities for mortifying the flesh. But, reverend Sir, the execution of the imperial orders rests with you, the arch priest of Constantinople, and the true occupant of the patriarchal throne.”

“Very true, my son, but the imperial orders have been known to change.”

“All the more reason why they should be quickly obeyed,” urged Eugenius.

“And what if the step which is praised for wisdom to-

day, should be reviled as sacrilegious to-morrow?" asked the timid old man.

"The step will have been taken, and that is the main thing."

"I tell you, my son, it may cost me the patriarchal chair!" said Arsacius. "Anything is possible to the Augusta's caprice."

"I must beg you, venerable Father, to consider seriously what I will now tell you in the strictest confidence," said Eugenius pointedly, "Bishop Severian, of Gabala, stands high in the favour of the Empress."

"And he deserves to do so," replied Arsacius; "for his courage and perseverance make him a valuable support to the cause of which the illustrious Augusta is the head."

"And do you know, reverend Sir, that the illustrious Augusta has no more earnest wish than to see Severian the successor of Chrysostom?"

"I have heard it said, my son: and I have only to say that I highly esteem the Bishop of Gabala, and share the feelings with which the exalted Augusta regards him: but she will never venture on the step of which you speak."

"I should like to know what she will not venture on, when she is in the humour," answered Eugenius impatiently.

"She will not venture to appoint a bishop who has never lost his Syrian accent, as preacher in Sta. Sophia," said Arsacius with solemn emphasis.

"I tell you venerable Father," cried Eugenius in an irritated voice, "that if once Bishop Severian is our Patriarch, he will be more engaged in State affairs than in

preaching ; and I must take the liberty of telling you further, that both he and the Augusta will see in your hesitation, not only the weakness of old age, but sympathy with Chrysostom, and a lack of loyalty to the Cæsar Augustus.”

“A lack of loyalty to the Cæsar Augustus !” faltered Arsacius.

“Yes, and to the Augusta herself.”

“But, my son,” said Arsacius nervously, “why did you not say this at first ? You mentioned this thing, and that thing, and left out the most important of all. Such a terrible thing as the suspicion you speak of must be annihilated without delay. Go at once to our friend Anthemius, and get him to give you an order placing the Thracians at your disposal, and then—do what is necessary with all possible speed. And now—away with you ! there is no time to lose.”

Full of secret triumph, Eugenius hastened to the Prefect of the Palace with the welcome tidings that there must be no delay in apprehending Chrysostom, as it could not be allowed that the solemn offices of Easter should be performed by a deposed Patriarch. “Let me have the Thracian troops for the purpose illustrious Anthemius,” said Eugenias in conclusion : “they are foreigners, and for the most part pagans, so they have no sympathies either with the people or the Patriarch.”

“Well,” answered Anthemius, “as you know what has to be done, you may have the Thracians. But you must remember that they are a rough lot, and I hope you will avoid all unnecessary bloodshed,”

“There shall not be a drop of blood spilt,” said Eu-

genius : “ we can accomplish our purpose without that.”

It was three hours past midnight, and the Cathedral of Sta. Sophia was full to overflowing. The Paschal candle was lighted : the priests were chaunting the psalms, and the faithful joining. It was evident that the baptism of the female catechumens was nearly over, for the deacons were already in the sanctuary preparing the altar for giving Holy Communion. With feelings of pious emotion the faithful awaited the happy white-robed band, who were to pass from one Sacrament to the other. Suddenly there was a stir in the crowd. The neophytes are coming ! But no—the faint murmur becomes a loud noise : there is the tramp of heavy feet—the clank of steel—now it is in the outer court, now in the vestibule : nearer it comes, and nearer : and now the fierce Thracian soldiers are rushing into the House of God. The confusion was fearful, some wanting to fly, some to stay, and others to hide themselves in the side chapels. Soon wailings, loud lamentations, and shrieks of terror were mingled with the oaths and execrations of the Thracians, who pressed on with drawn swords and lowered lances, to force a path through the crowd. The scene became terrible : fainting, bleeding, wounded persons blocked up the way of those who were trying to escape ; mothers were seeking to protect their children, husbands their wives. Still the soldiers press forward—now they are in the sanctuary—they seize priests and deacons indiscriminately, for the chance that Chrysostom, to whom they are strangers, may be among them. Then they snatch the sacred vessels, a splendid booty, from the altar. A second troop has entered the baptistery ! Lucius led it

himself, for he thought it likely that the Patriarch would be here, and he did not wish him to fall into the rude hands of his men. Close to Lucius was a young soldier, who seemed to bear his arms awkwardly, and to be more occupied in giving directions than in following them.

The baptism was just over as the intruders broke in. The white-robed band, just about to enter the Church, now shrank back, terrified, into the baptistery, or into the adjoining apartments in which they had prepared themselves for the sacred ceremony, clustering round the Patriarch, like helpless lambs around their shepherd. The men, who had hitherto been waiting in rooms assigned to them, now came pouring in. They flung themselves against the advancing soldiery in the hope of overpowering them by their numbers, and keeping them from reaching the priests and the women. But the Thracians used their arms, and blood flowed, flowed into the font itself ! At that sight of horror some priests and deacons interposed between the armed and the defenceless, they, too, were wounded, while still the soldiers struggled on to reach Chrysostom, who stood at some little distance surrounded by a compact mass of priests and veiled women.

“ That is he ! ” shouted Lucius : “ the little man with the mitre—seize him ! ” In an instant a woman’s hand had snatched the mitre from the Patriarch’s head.

“ That was *her* hand ! *she* did that ! ” cried the young soldier who stood by Lucius.

“ Who ?—what ? ” asked the latter.

“ Seize the Patriarch ! the excommunicated traitor ! ” exclaimed the soldier, struggling madly to reach the tall, slight, closely veiled figure standing so calmly behind

Chrysostom. He well knew that proud tranquillity, that noble bearing, that fearless spirit. Seeing none but her, he forced his way on, followed by some of the soldiers, who thrust the women on one side, or to the ground, as it happened, with their spears. He noticed nothing else: he did not see one of the troop aim a violent blow at the Patriarch, nor how a woman threw herself before him and received the stroke—nor how, with a sobbing groan, she fell—but he did see how the tall form he was watching bent forward, either to shield Chrysostom, or to support the fallen woman. At the same moment Lucius reached the Patriarch, and the eager companion *his* prey. He caught her in his arms, hastened through a side entrance into an inner court, and placed her, half dead with terror, in a closed litter, whose bearers were waiting for him. The bearers bore off the litter, and the man returned to the desecrated church, to make sure that Lucius had the Patriarch in safe custody. He found that this was the case: and now that the soldiers were gone, the confusion of the crowd was gradually subsiding. The male catechumens were conducted by some of the priests to the Baths of Constantius, and there this multitude of men and youths were baptised. The wounded men were being carried out of the church, the blood washed from the floor, the broken vessels and torn garments cleared away. Involuntarily he shuddered at the sight. Then, from the baptistery, came a number of women, four of them carrying between them a large linen sheet, on which lay a veiled, dead form. The soldier turned away: “Horrible,” he muttered, “if a woman should really have been killed! But why did

they not keep out of the way? we were only concerned with him and her!"

As the mournful procession passed by, he heard one of the women say, "Poor child!" "Do not pity her," said another, "to pass from this world in all the spotless glory of baptismal grace—O do not pity such a highly favoured soul!" "Who was she? Is she not very young?" "She was fifteen years old, her name was Flora, the daughter of a neighbour of mine, a cruel, grasping old usurer, called Dioscorus." "To think of such a fair lily blooming in such a soil!" "Yes—thanks to that fairest of lilies, the Lily among thorns, the Queen of Virgins."

The listener rushed from the church. He could not silence the inward voice which kept whispering—"This murder lies at your door: all these crimes are on your head."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## THE FIRE IN SANTA SOPHIA.

The news of the preceding events had not reached the Palace of Constantine, when very early in the morning, Arsacius arrived, urging the Emperor to sign the decree of banishment at once, and so prevent the schismatic Chrysostom from celebrating the Easter Festival. Arcadius would willingly have put off the evil day: and as usual, he hesitated. Then Eudoxia said: "Even if you had not, in his presence, yesterday, given orders to conduct him out of Sta. Sophia, illustrious Emperor, this delay would not be wise or desirable: but, as things are, it seems to me simply impossible. Having, on good grounds, forbidden him to enter the church, it follows that he must be banished from the city; for Constantinople is his residence only on account of the church. We must not leave our good people shepherdless, and the venerable Arsacius can officiate as arch-priest till he receives episcopal consecration."

Arcadius took the document in silence, signed the decree, and gave it to Patricius, his private secretary, who hastened with it to the Palace of the Patriarch. Every entrance was guarded by the Thracians, to prevent

any attempt at flight. In the Palace itself all was quiet, and Patricius found the Patriarch in earnest conversation with two bishops of Ionia. Courtier as the secretary was, he was involuntarily impressed by the simple dignity of Chrysostom, and it was with great respect that he presented the document of which he was the bearer, and stammered out a few words of regret. Chrysostom read the decree calmly, handed it to one of the bishops, and said with quiet dignity to Patricius : “ I request you to tell the illustrious Cæsar Augustus that I will immediately leave this house, and the city also, as soon as I have taken leave of my clergy in the church, that I will then take ship for Bithynia, and thence proceed to Lesser Armenia. There, as here, I shall esteem it a sacred duty to pray for God’s grace and blessing on him and his.” “ Oh, do not lament for me,” he said, after Patricius had taken leave, and his two friends could not restrain the expression of their grief, “ can I not offer myself to God as well at the foot of Caucasus as on the shores of the Bosphorus? If I could not, then, indeed, you might bewail my lot. Come now, and help me to make my farewells, which I should like to be short and quiet.”

In the ante-chamber Serapion met him, bathed in tears. After the events of the night, every one was prepared for the news of which the secretary was the bearer, and several priests and bishops were waiting in the spacious apartments attached to the sacristy, to take leave of Chrysostom. All were deeply moved; and he himself could scarcely restrain his feelings at the thought of that beloved flock which he must now leave to the care of a hireling, and to the assaults of ferocious wolves. In a

few earnest words he commended all to God, and himself to their prayers, and then, with tears in his eyes, passed into another room, where some noble and pious ladies were waiting for his last blessing. With the deaconesses Pentadia, Procla, and Olympias, came Salviana, the daughter of a Mauritanian prince, and a relative of Arcadius, who lived in the court a life of self-denying strictness, and was the friend and companion of saints. They knelt before him, kissing his feet and the hem of his robe, but none of them could speak for sorrow. "Be comforted!" said the calm affectionate voice, "how could you expect, you who have put worldly things under your feet, to pass a quiet and untroubled life on earth? How could you practise patience and resignation, how could you earn their recompense, in a life without thorns and suffering? Like material gold, the gold of the spirit must be tried by fire. Weep not for me—and weep not for yourselves—but for them who have wrought all this evil." He gave them his blessing, and went quickly into the Church to pass a few moments before the altar. Then he left it by a side-door, where Lucius and his Thracians awaited him; and so, accompanied by the two Ionian bishops, who refused to leave him, went quickly and quietly to the harbour, and embarked for Bithynia. It was his last farewell—his last sight of Constantinople; for he died, soon after, worn out with trials and sufferings, in his place of banishment.

At about nine o'clock in the forenoon, Arsacius, accompanied by Severian and a brilliant retinue, set out for Sta. Sophia, to perform the solemn Easter offices, and to await the imperial pair who were to assist at them,

But there was a death-like stillness all round ! Not a soul was in the court or the portico, and when the doors of the church had to be opened, they were found bolted on the inside, as if to exclude the intruders. Arsacius turned to Florus : “ You must go through the north court, and the sacristy door—that can soon be got open, even if it is fastened—and open the great doors for us. You know your way about here ; take some people with you, and see that nothing is injured.”

Florus hastened to obey, and Arsacius and Severian walked up and down together : the former expressing his surprise at the deserted appearance of the place.

“ It seems to me easily explained,” said Severian, with his cold sarcastic smile : “ the people were driven out last night, and Chrysostom this morning—who is left to be here ? ”

“ What will the Cæsar Augustus say, when he finds the church empty ? ” said Arsacius, dolefully. “ Will he not think that all piety has departed with Chrysostom ? Could not these Thracians drive some people in ? ”

“ No doubt they might do so : but thousands of the people, they say, have followed Chrysostom’s priests into the country, in order to avoid coming into contact with us on the festival. They seem determined on making a schism, and refusing to acknowledge you.”

“ The rebels !—disloyal to the Church and the Emperor ! ” and Arsacius raised his hands to Heaven, as if to appeal against such a crime.

Severian’s answer was never made, for he and his companion were startled by a loud cry of horror. The

great door had just been opened wide: Florus and his companions rushed out, white with fear: the choir of the church was in flames.

“Fire! fire in the cathedral!” passed from mouth to mouth. “The wretches!” cried Severian. “Was it *their* doing? . . . the rebels?” asked Arsacius. “Who else could do it?” said Florus. “To the Emperor!” commanded the Bishop of Gabala: “these contumacious, schismatical, incendiary adherents of Chrysostom shall be punished as they deserve.” “My cathedral will be destroyed!” cried Arsacius, trembling with rage and terror.

They hastened to the Palace of Constantine, while now, crowds hurried to the spot from every quarter, some to help to extinguish the fire—others from curiosity.

“How did it happen?” people asked each other.

“It fell from Heaven,” said one old man, “to avenge the horrors of last night.”

“No,” exclaimed another, “it burst out of the earth to hinder the holy place from being profaned by Arsacius: just as flames came from the ruins of Jerusalem when the apostate Julian tried to rebuild the temple.”

“Perhaps *you* set it on fire, in revenge for the banishment of your excommunicated Patriarch,” said an audacious sailor.

“Much an Egyptian knows about our Patriarch! . . . His own has had to slink away in disgrace . . . He is at the bottom of all the trouble!” cried more than one angry voice.

“Peace with all this chatter and folly!” said a respectable looking man; “it was no doubt a torch upset in one

of the stalls, or a candle which fell on a roll of parchment, that caused the fire. Do not make matters worse by quarrelling and abuse."

But this was far too commonplace an explanation of so startling an event, and one party persisted in ascribing it to a supernatural chastisement, the other to the act of a criminal. Bishop Severian concluded his report to the Emperor in these words: "We see now of what stuff these extra-devout, ascetic people are made! Gold on their lips, poison in their hearts, murder in their hands!"

"I will have the matter closely investigated, and severely punished," said Arcadius. "Let the Prefect of the city take the necessary steps without delay, and arrest all persons on whom suspicion may fall. You, venerable Fathers, will, I know, give Optatus all the support in your power: I especially expect this from you, most reverend Arsacius. Who is so much aggrieved by any injury to the cathedral as its Bishop?"

"You see, venerable Father, that in his just indignation the Cæsar Augustus expects youthful zeal from your grey hairs," added Eudoxia pointedly: she could not forgive Arsacius for preceding Severian in the patriarchal dignity.

So the list of the suspected was drawn up—they were principally priests and women—and those whose names were in it were arrested without delay. The fire in Sta. Sophia was a welcome excuse for getting rid of those persons who were certain never to acknowledge the new Patriarch, and whose example and influence were to be dreaded. One of the first names was that of Olympias. Sorrowful, and utterly exhausted, she was kneeling with

a few of her women by Flora's beautiful corpse. The prayers which were generally uttered with such fervent earnestness, fell faintly from her lips, and sometimes she stopped for very weariness and pain. "Lord have mercy on us!—Lord, enter not into judgment with us!" were the only clear thoughts in her mind. At last, she grew so faint, that she rose from her knees, and went out into the court for a little air. Theone and Elpis were standing there, with their backs turned to her; Elpis was saying, in a despairing way: "Which of us shall tell her this dreadful news?"

"You shall, dear Elpis," said Olympias.

The two girls turned round, startled, and Elpis said: "A fire has broken out in Sta. Sophia; the interior is destroyed, and the adjoining buildings also: and now it seems likely to catch the senate-house, there is such a high wind."

"Are any lives lost?—has any one been hurt?" asked Olympias.

"I believe not, lady."

"Then, good Elpis, we must thank God for His mercy."

Elpis was silent, and Theone said: "O dear lady, . . . . there is something else . . . . and you must know."

"Then speak, my child! I can bear anything to-day," Olympias answered; but she looked deadly pale, and a shudder ran through her limbs.

"The noble Gunilda did not return with us," faltered Theone.

"If she had shared Flora's fate, you would have

brought her back to me, I know," said Olympias, with tears in her eyes.

"Indeed we would!" they both replied; and Theone added, "No, she is not dead."

"Then, doubtless, she went with the neophytes of some other deaconess."

"No—lady—not so."

"Tell me, then," said Olympias, anxiously, "what has happened to her?"

It was Elpis who answered: "At the moment when the soldier rushed with his drawn sword on our holy Father, and when Flora threw herself before him and received the fatal blow, another soldier seized Gunilda, and carried her off. I was at the other end of the baptistery, and saw it all: it happened in a moment. Afterwards I could only think of Flora, and I did not recall the scene till just now, when Theone asked me about Gunilda."

"You are certain about the soldier?"

"As certain as that we stand here, lady."

"Then take comfort! The Thracians were sent to seize our holy Father, and to drive the faithful out of Sta. Sophia; they did not attack defenceless women unless they happened to be in their way. The Augusta, doubtless, remembered Gunilda, and must have ordered her to be brought out of that hideous scene to a place of safety."

"But she was closely veiled: how could the Thracian recognise her?" asked Elpis, still unsatisfied.

"Oh," said Olympias, sadly, "when the Augusta commands, wonders happen: besides, the Captain of the

troops very likely knew her, and pointed her out to the soldier."

"Would to Heaven she were with us!" said Elpis.

"We are all in the hands of God," Olympias answered gently, "and, Elpis, you may be quite sure that Gunilda is safer in the Palace of Constantine than here."

She was still speaking when a maid came in great haste and excitement, to announce a messenger from Optatus, to conduct Olympias to the Prefect.

"See," she said to Elpis, "how right I was: now, come with me to Optatus."

"Now! worn out as you are!" exclaimed Theone.

"Why not—when God calls me?"

"God!" cried the girl indignantly, "it is malice and wickedness that call you, dear lady."

"Well—and are not they His unconscious and involuntary servants?" returned Olympias. And leaning on Elpis, she followed the messenger, accompanied by Theone.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## IN THE GOLDEN PRISON.

When Gunilda found herself in a closed litter, and when the length of the time showed her that she was being conveyed to a distant part of the city, she guessed the truth. “Unhappy man!” she sighed—then she thought of calling for help; but who would hear in the confused crowded state of the streets? “So this is my Easter morning; my Resurrection day!” and then she prayed for light to know, and for strength to do, the Will of God.

The litter stopped before a house, the same as that in which she had been once before. The door opened, and the bearers passed into the inner court, and set their burthen down. A woman approached Gunilda respectfully, and was about to speak, but she was forestalled. “Where is my prison?” asked Gunilda.

“Your prison, noble lady!—do not call it by that name.”

“Then open the door for me, so that I may go.”

“Nay, noble lady; you are only just come—you cannot go till you are rested and refreshed.”

“Enough! it is as I said: I am in prison, and I know it.”

The woman opened the door of a splendidly furnished and brilliantly lighted room : “ Is that like a prison ? ” she asked : “ what is wanting here, lady, that you can desire ? ”

“ Nothing,” answered Gunilda, “ except my liberty.”

The woman did not notice this, but kept pressing her with attentions : would she not rest on the couch ? —did she not require some refreshment ? —there were fruits, wine, and biscuits on the table—or to change her dress ? she would supply her with everything. Gunilda interrupted her by asking her name.

“ Phœbe, noble lady, at your service.”

“ Then, Phœbe, the only service I require of you is to leave me, and not to come again unless I desire it. Now go.”

Phœbe obeyed, saying to herself, “ She was to be served like a queen, the illustrious Eugenius said . . . I wonder if she is really of royal birth.”

Gunilda, as soon as she was left alone, looked with unutterable melancholy at the table spread with various dainties, and at the rich dresses which lay about the room. She thought, “ I hoped to be admitted this day to a heavenly banquet ; but my lips, my heart, are unworthy of it. As Thou wilt, my Lord ! One thing is mine—the robe of grace which I have this day put on, not to be changed for another.”

The door opened, and Eugenius entered, wrapped in a white military cloak. She turned her beautiful head quietly towards him, and said coldly : “ Of what use is that disguise ? I know you and was expecting you.”

Eugenius, who had once again succeeded in forcing himself into Gunilda’s presence against her will, was

now, as before, utterly at a loss when he found himself confronted by her. Her quiet dignity was the same, though a feeling of compassion for the state of his soul now predominated in her, and animated her stern and peremptory rejection of his entreaties. Eugenius mistook it for scorn and hate. After a very few words had passed between them, she remained silent. Eugenius began to threaten her wildly, but she maintained the same look of icy indifference, even after he had half drawn the short sword which hung at his side. At last he suddenly rushed from the room, and she drew a deep breath of relief. The air seemed free again. What were her thoughts, her hopes? She did not know herself—or at least she could not put them into words. As little did Eugenius know his. A whole world of plans, and of passions, filled his brain and heart. Gunilda had an irresistible power over him, and the consciousness of this brought with it a sense of humiliation for which he longed to revenge himself. He was changing his military disguise for his usual dress, when a servant entered with an urgent request from Florus to speak with him. Half angry at the interruption, Eugenius gave orders for his admission.

“Why, how is this?” cried Florus, “you look as dark as night! Did your attempt fail, when ours succeeded so brilliantly?”

“What do you want with me?” asked Eugenius shortly.

“This, illustrious Eugenius,” answered Florus, falling at once into a more respectful tone: “Sta. Sophia is in flames—suspicion falls on the partisans of Chrysostom,

and they are all in custody. Now can you mention any one whose name can be added to the list of the suspected?"

"Yes," came the gloomy but decisive answer—"Gunilda."

Florus started: "Gunilda, the Goth?" he asked, unable to believe his ears.

"Yes, I mean her!" answered Eugenius excitedly. "I have heard that among the Gothic women there are enchantresses from whose magic spells their victims are unable to escape: Gunilda is one of them."

"Noble Eugenius, you are dreaming!"

"Even if she is not," continued Eugenius, regardless of the astonishment of Florus, "she is one of Chrysostom's blindest followers, and therefore in the number of those who ought to be closely confined, to break their stubborn pride."

"Capital!" cried Florus, triumphantly, "all that man's disciples seem to be of the same stamp—we will make them illustrations of the text, 'The disciple is not above the master.'"

"With all my heart, so far as he and the rest are concerned: but not a finger shall be laid on *her*—only solitary, close confinement."

"Oh, not solitary," answered Florus, "she will be in excellent company, the whole pious tribe together—Serapion, Tigrius, Euthemius, and the deaconesses! I will send a party of soldiers, and you can pack off your sorceress when you please."

Then Florus withdrew, thinking—for unbelief and superstition mostly go together—"I wonder if she is really an enchantress, this beautiful barbarian!"

He went to Lucius, desired him to send two or three of his Thracians to the house of Eugenius, and turned his steps to Eugraphia's. She was just leaving her dressing-room, and saying to her slaves : “ Let me see none but cheerful faces to-day ! It is a regular gala day —the wicked Patriarch has left Constantinople : a conspiracy of his partisans has been detected : they intended to burn the Palace of the Cæsars, as well as Sta. Sophia, but Divine Providence brings the schemes of bad men to nothing : so you should be full of joy.”

“ Joy and sorrow are so much the same to me,” sighed Leonilla, when her mistress was out of hearing, “ that I cannot distinguish between them.”

“ Everything she said sounded so horrible, that I could not rejoice at it,” said Cyane.

“ At all events, being Easter-Day, it must be a festival,” added Melitta.

“ Come now—no idle chattering !” said Eugenia. “ Those of you who have done your work can get ready for church—the rest must finish.”

“ Well, my good Florus ! we have reached the goal,” were the words with which Eugraphia greeted her fellow conspirator : “ all that remains is to crush the body, which is easy enough now that it has lost its head.”

“ Most Illustrious ! the noble Optatus is settling that matter. Some are to be banished, some to forfeit their property, and others to suffer corporal punishments. In which number do you think the noble Gunilda should be placed ?”

“ In all—if it were possible !” was the angry reply :

“she has been the evil genius of my poor nephew : she will go on working for his destruction to the end.”

“He feels that himself, illustrious Eugraphia : I am just come from him—he called her an enchantress, whose spells had bewitched him.”

“So she is ! there is something fiendish about her : fair and smooth as a serpent she insinuated herself completely into the Empress’ favour, and it was only by her ingratitude that she herself broke the spell. She will not break that which she has cast on Eugenius : we must do that. Go at once to Optatus, and tell him in my name that Gunilda, the daughter of Gainas, after being loaded with benefits by the Emperor and Empress, has gone over to the party of Chrysostom, and is strongly suspected of magical practices. She must be stopped in her course—punished and banished—she must disappear altogether into some desert . . . . I do not know how, Florus”——

Florus interrupted her : “The Prefect Optatus will know : he is at home in such matters.”

“Well—go to him, and put the case as strongly as I could and would, only that I must hasten to the Church of the Apostles, where the Emperor and Empress are to be to-day. In time, poor Eugenius will thank us both for the step we are taking, so you must stand by me and help me to get him out of the power of this sorceress. Be very sure that your true and faithful services shall not go unrewarded, and that if you succeed in delivering my nephew from his unfortunate infatuation—I mean of course from its object—all that the most soaring ambition can desire, shall be yours.”

Florus departed on his mission : Eugraphia looked

thoughtfully after him: "A useful tool in times like these, when intrigue is necessary, but one likely to be troublesome when things are smooth and orderly again. That blood-hound sort of nature requires to be kept within bounds, otherwise it is apt sometimes to follow a track which is undesirable, and to make all sorts of inconvenient discoveries. The thing would be to get him appointed to some remote bishopric—in Mesopotamia, for instance. . . . . I half fear though, that he will not care to leave Constantinople."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## THE TRIAL.

There was no occasion to urge Optatus to strong measures. Florus soon saw that he was ready and willing to proceed to the utmost extremities. The faithful children of the Church were accused of high treason, of contumacious resistance to the imperial will, or of the vulgar crime of incendiarism, according to what seemed the most judicious course in each particular case. The aged priest Tigrius, the deacon Serapion, and the young lector Euthemius, had already undergone terrible tortures. It was well known that Chrysostom was strongly attached to them for their rare virtues and eminent gifts, and on this account it would have been highly desirable to make them desert to the camp of Arsacius. But they all stood firm. Euthemius died under his dreadful sufferings, declaring with his last breath his innocence of all guilt, and his inviolable fidelity to the Church and Chrysostom. Tigrius and Serapion were thrown into a miserable dungeon, where they soon had many companions—all of them being left, helpless and bleeding, to live or to die, as the case might be. Then followed Pentadia's trial. A witness appeared against her to swear that she had

taken advantage of the tumult and confusion in the baptistery to slip into the choir and set fire to it. This witness was a young girl whom Pentadia had loaded with benefits in the hope of saving her from the snares of sin : she wished to be baptised, because the other catechumens were to be admitted to that Sacrament. This Pentadia could not allow, and the unfortunate girl took the necessary delay as an offence, and revenged herself by ingratitude and perjury. Several companions of Pentadia denied the truth of the story in the most positive terms, saying that they had never left her the whole time. Then the Prefect ordered them all to be put to the rack in succession. This was a plank fixed on two beams ; at the lower end was a windlass, at the upper end was a strong stake. The victim was stretched on the plank, the arms were raised above the head, and fastened to the stake ; the cord which tied the feet ran round the windlass, so that when it was turned, the body was forcibly stretched out, till at last the limbs started from the joints and the sinews cracked. Four of Pentadia's companions were thus horribly tortured before her eyes. Their mantles, shoes, and veils were taken off, and they were stretched like corpses, in their white robes, bound hand and foot on the hideous plank ; then the handle of the windlass was turned—a faint moan was heard—soon it became a heart-rending cry—a shriek of mortal agony—then they were questioned—but one and all maintained the truth. The unhappy Pentadia stood by, paralysed with anguish.

“ You must be a monster of a woman, not to be moved by these sufferings to confess your crime.”

“ I am ready for torture and for death,” she said, in a

voice of dull misery ; “ for it may be that that is the will of God. But a lie is never His will—I cannot lie.”

While these scenes of horror were taking place, Phœbe had again appeared before Gunilda, saying, in her cringing officious way, “ Lady, you are used to being waited on ; do me the honour of permitting me to supply the place of your slaves, and to obey the orders of my mistress.”

“ I am not your mistress,” Gunilda answered quietly ; “ I have taught myself to do without being waited on ; I have no orders to give in a strange house, more especially when that house is a prison.”

“ A golden prison, at all events, noble lady ! And whatever it is, you need food and rest.”

“ Leave me, then, that I may have rest,” Gunilda again replied.

“ If only I could be sure of your taking rest ! I am sure you require it—you look so tired !”

“ My poor Phœbe, *you* make me tired !” said Gunilda in a tone of utter weariness. “ Never fear but that the time for me to rest will come ; but not in this house : and now I must decline all your offers of service.”

Before Phœbe could reply an unusual noise was heard in the house : Eugenius entered and she disappeared. He placed himself opposite Gunilda, looked in silence, first at her, then round the room, and then said : “ You call this house a prison, you will accept of no refreshment, no attendance—what is your purpose in all this ? Speak ! this obstinate silence of yours is enough to drive me mad.”

“ I am not bound to explain my purposes to you,” she

replied with perfect composure. "As to my silence, you know that I consider it right to keep it, and you know why I do so. There is no obstinacy in it."

"And you persist in it?"

"Yes—to you."

"And you persist, too, in saying that you are in a prison here?"

"And am I not?" she asked in her turn.

"Well! you must now prepare yourself to enter a real prison, where your days will be spent in solitude, without refreshment, without attendance, without a place of rest."

"If I shall be safe there from your presence, let me go at once:" and Gunilda rose quickly from her seat.

"Your hatred is so great as that?"

"It is not hatred."

"Your aversion, then, your contempt——"

"I am not going to explain my sentiments to you. You see that I am anxious to leave this house and your presence."

"Be it so," said Eugenius with concentrated fury: "but do not imagine that you are going to prison as an innocent person. You go there accused of heinous offences."

"By whom?" she asked, with a sudden emotion of pride.

"By me," Eugenius answered coldly, opening the door, and showing the Thracians who were outside.

Silently Gunilda went out of the room, and seeing cords in the hands of the soldiers, she quietly held out her hands to be bound, and then followed them.

Phœbe was looking on, lost in astonishment. "The queen is changed into a lamb!" she muttered to herself; "but surely they are not going to make her a lamb for the sacrifice?"

"What is that to you?" asked a harsh voice behind her: and looking round with a start, she saw her master, deadly pale, and his features convulsed with agitation. Later on, he left the house, to see what would be done with Gunilda: he entered the court of justice, and ascertained that the trials were over for the day: it was not desirable to spend the whole of Easter Day in torturing. The accused were all in prison—Olympias among them. Her trial was fixed for the next morning—then would follow Gunilda's, who was now in solitary confinement. This was all Eugenius wished. He tried to hope that her strength and courage would give way in her dungeon. "But if not," he asked himself, "what then?" And all day long there was an awful whisper in his heart: "What then—what then?"

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE DUNGEON, THE PALACE, AND THE DESERT.

The Emperor Arcadius was entirely ignorant of all these terrible events. He and the Empress, attended by the whole court, and by all who adhered to the imperial party, had heard Mass in the Church of the Apostles. The fire, after having destroyed the interior of Sta. Sophia, some adjoining buildings, and the senate-house, had been extinguished ; and Arcadius was told that no doubt the perpetrators of the outrage would in time be discovered and punished. Chrysostom had been conveyed to Bithynia, quietly and without disturbance,—everything was going on smoothly—what was there to cause anxiety ? It was an exquisite spring day : the first tints of tender green lay like a veil over the magnificent woods of plane and chestnut which surrounded Constantinople on the landward side ; hill and valley smiled in their newly donned greenery, and in that incomparable play of light and colour which is the especial charm of a southern spring.

“ Nature is keeping her Resurrection festival to-day, my dear lord : shall not we, too, enjoy it ? ” said Eudoxia, always ready to contribute to her husband’s pleasure.

And he, as ready to enter into hers, willingly consented to make an excursion with her. They took their seat in a carriage drawn by two milk-white mules. It was of rare wood, richly inlaid with gold and precious stones. Red silk curtains formed a canopy over the seat, a Persian carpet was spread for the feet of the imperial pair, and the trappings of the mules glittered with small, closely hung plates of gold which tinkled musically at every movement. Gleaming in the brilliant sunlight, the equipage looked like a thing of fairyland: and so, surrounded by a gaily attired suite, and by the soldiers of the body-guard, Arcadius and Eudoxia passed through the Golden Gate into the green hill-country of Thrace. The party halted on an eminence commanding the Propontis and the Bithynian Olympus, to enjoy this magnificent view. As the Emperor looked, his eye was caught by what seemed like a white field between two low hills.

“What is it, Anthemius?” he asked of the Prefect of the Palace: “not tents, for they move—can it be a vast flock of swans?”

“Would to God it were so, illustrious Augustus!” Anthemius answered sighing: “for then they would not be a blot on this fair scene—an offence to your pious eyes. They are the members of a hateful sect, who hold their meetings there, since, thanks to the great Theodosius, such heretical assemblies are prohibited within the walls of the city.”

“Will the Church of God never be freed from the plague of heresy!” said Arcadius sadly. “You are right, Anthemius, this sight is enough to disfigure the

loveliest landscape, for it is an offence to the Divine Majesty."

He was dull and depressed during the drive back: even Eudoxia failed to cheer him. As soon as she was in her own apartments, she commanded the attendance of the Prefect of the Palace.

"I do not like the Emperor to be unnecessarily annoyed and disturbed, Anthemius," she said with a displeased expression; "why could you not leave him under the impression that what we saw was an immense flock of swans?"

"Because I was afraid, mighty Augusta, that the Emperor might inquire further, and learn the truth."

"Then that was an invention about the heretics? what was it then, really?"

"More than two thousand neophytes in their white baptismal robes, who, with a few priests, have retired to that secluded valley, partly to avoid the danger of being arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the fire, partly to be undisturbed at evening service."

"These neophytes are not very far from being sectaries in their obstinate adherence to Chrysostom," said Eudoxia, "and under the circumstances, it was certainly best to say what you did. You may go, Anthemius, I am quite satisfied."

The Prefect rose from his kneeling posture, and retired, considerably relieved in his mind. People were beginning to fear the Augusta greatly.

It was night, deep night in the narrow dungeon in which Pentadia, Olympias, and their companions were confined: deep night in the vast dreary prison which had

been assigned to Gunilda. While her friends were so crowded together that they could not all sit or lie at once on the floor of their dungeon, and left what space there was for the poor victims of the rack, and the delicate, ailing Olympias, Gunilda seemed to be in a great desert with no companions except toads and rats, moles and spiders, and all the disgusting creatures which inhabit such damp, dark, cavern-like places. For her there was the shuddering horror of utter solitude, and such a solitude ! for them the pain of being together without the power of helping or relieving each other. But pure hearts are strong, and none of them all wavered in faith or endurance, but held themselves in readiness for still greater sufferings. It was past midnight. Gunilda was quite worn out with the vigil of Holy Saturday and all she had gone through since. She was faint, too, from want of food, and parched with a burning thirst. She sank, exhausted, on the damp uneven floor, but she could not rest there, she started up again, terrified and disgusted by the horrid reptiles that crawled over her as she lay. Then she folded her hands and prayed aloud. “O Thou Who hast this day betrothed my ransomed soul to Thyself, if it is Thy will to lead Thy bride by the thorny path along which Thine own Sacred Feet once went ; if she, like Thee, must suffer weariness and hunger, like Thee, be met by the Tempter—grant Lord, that she may overcome him, and send Thy angels, not, indeed, to minister to her, as they did to Thee, but to give her strength and courage to support !”

A strong light flashed suddenly into the darkness, and dazzled her eyes painfully. It came from the torches of

the guards who were to conduct her before Optatus for her trial—the work of darkness was to be finished by night. Olympias was already standing at his tribunal.

“What was your motive for setting fire to Sta. Sophia?” he asked harshly and abruptly.

“You know what my life has been,” she answered; “it is not likely that a person who has spent large sums in building churches would try to destroy them.”

“Yes,” said Optatus fiercely; “I know pretty well what your life has been!”

“Well, then,” answered Olympias calmly, “if you find anything in it which is matter for accusation, be my accuser yourself, and let another be my judge.”

At this moment Gunilda appeared, so pale, so calm, so beautiful, that she looked like a saint whose victory had been already won. Elpis uttered a suppressed cry—Olympias closed her eyes, and seemed about to fall, but she soon regained her composure, and stretching out her arms to her, exclaimed, “O God be praised that on your first entrance into the Church, He honours you by allowing you to make *such* a confession of faith!”

“Are you speaking seriously?” sneered Optatus.

“I always speak as I think,” Olympias answered.

“And I feel as she does,” added Gunilda.

“Very well,” said Optatus; “the noble Gunilda will have the illustrious Olympias as a witness of this confession;” then turning to the former, he said: “the crime of which you stand accused is not that of participation in the fire, but a still more heinous offence, and one that is in strange contrast with your external show of holiness, and your display of religion,—witchcraft!”

Gunilda lifted her eyes to the Prefect's face in speechless astonishment.

"Yes; you may feign astonishment as much as you please!" he said, with an insulting laugh. "I know you! —it is as I say, you are accused of having practised magical arts."

"I?" said Gunilda, perfectly bewildered—"I cannot understand it."

"I will soon make you understand!—you are accused of having administered a love-philtre to Eugenius, the nephew of the illustrious Eugraphia."

"O horrible!" faltered Gunilda in a broken voice, and covering her face with her hands.

"Ha!" cried Optatus, "your shame is a confession in itself."

"I am only ashamed at being the subject of such an accusation," said Gunilda.

"Pride in such a one as you is very much out of place."

"That is quite true," she answered, and a bright, beautiful smile lighted up her pale face. It was the first time that Olympias had seen her since her baptism, and it seemed to her as if Gunilda's whole being were illuminated and transfigured—everything about her that had been hard and abrupt had melted away in the sunshine of heavenly grace.

"The Blessed in Heaven must smile like that!" whispered Elpis to Olympias.

"Do you confess your guilt?" asked Optatus.

"I am innocent."

"If you deny it, I must see if the rack cannot extort the truth."

"I am innocent,"

At a signal from the Prefect the guards approached.

“Mercy, Optatus!” cried Olympias, overpowered by grief and horror.

“That word would never have been spoken by you on your own account, dearest Olympias,” said Gunilda, gently. “Do not wish for me what you would not wish for yourself.” She motioned the soldiers back, and herself removed her mantle, veil, and shoes. Part of her rich golden-brown hair had fallen down, she twisted it round her head, so that the beautiful pale face looked like a pearl set in gold. Once more Optatus beckoned to the soldiers, and again Gunilda motioned them back. In her long white trailing robes she walked calmly to the horrible rack. Then, turning to Optatus, she said :

“The same miserable man who opened for me the earthly paradise, the Church, to-day will open for me the heavenly one. May my sufferings be accepted for the good of his soul. And now, dear Olympias, farewell, till we meet again in the rest of Eternity.”

“Are you going, then—really?” asked Olympias.

“I think so—a soul is crying to me for salvation. I can do nothing to help it here . . . . perhaps, when I plead for it before the Throne of God He will hear me.”

“Go then, my Gunilda, as a lamb to the sacrifice,” said Olympias in a firm voice: but she trembled so much that she had to lean on Theone’s arm.

“We shall soon have the truth from you—why, you are wandering in your speech already, merely from fear! Now, be quick if you will not allow any one to help you,” cried Optatus, impatiently.

Gunilda lay down on the plank saying, “Lord, into Thy Five Sacred Wounds I commend my soul.”

The executioners did their work: they bound her hands and feet, and placed round her neck a cord which was fastened to the stake. This was not usually done, but the hint which Euphemia had given to Optatus with reference to Gunilda, had not been lost upon him. When all the ghastly preparations were made, the Prefect asked her :

“Do you confess having practised wicked and magical arts?”

“I have never done so,” she answered clearly and firmly. And then the torturers did their work.

“O crucified Saviour, help her!” Olympias prayed in agony. Then all was silent as the grave.

“Enough!” said Optatus to the executioners: then to Gunilda :

“Now, will you confess?” But no answer came: no faintest murmur broke the utter silence.

“She has fainted—unbind her!” said the Prefect, coldly.

They obeyed his orders, and one of them lifted her in his arms from the instrument of torture: her head, her limbs, hung down slack and helpless. The man laid her on the ground before the Prefect, saying: “Sir, she is dead!”

And Elpis whispered, “The lamb is sacrificed!”

“And taken to the rest and the glory of her Lord,” said Olympias, with supernatural composure; then, turning to Optatus: “You will allow me to remove her corpse and bury it?”

“As you will,” he answered, harshly: “presently you shall hear your own sentence.”

He left the hall quickly. “The daughter of the traitor—a traitoress herself—she has but had her due!” he muttered, gloomily to himself, trying to stifle the importunate voice of conscience. But it was in vain—he tried to rest, but could not; so he rose once more, and occupied himself drawing up the different sentences of the accused. Early in the morning a servant announced Eugenius.

“Show him in,” said Optatus, “but see that five or six men are on guard close to the door, and tell them to enter directly I call.”

When Eugenius entered, the Prefect started on seeing the fearful agitation which convulsed his features. “You are ill—sit down—what can I do for you?”

“You can answer my question,” Eugenius answered, placing himself directly before Optatus. “I have just been to the Hall of Justice, and have there heard that the lector Euthemius, a maid of Pentadia’s, and—the noble Gothic lady, Gunilda, died under the torture. Is this true?”

“I did not know about Pentadia’s maid—it is true of the other two,” replied Optatus, calmly..

“Then, to hell with you!” yelled Eugenius, rushing on him with a short sword which he had concealed beneath his mantle. But the Prefect had been watching every movement, and now, dexterously evading the blow, he summoned the guard. Eugenius, losing his balance from the violence of his fruitless attack, had fallen heavily to the ground.

“Secure him, and take him away—he is mad,” was the order which Optatus, with cold-blooded indifference, gave to the guard.

A few hours later, Bishop Severian presented himself in Eudoxia’s apartments. “Your coming, venerable Father, is always an augury of good. May I ask what it is on this occasion?” she said, courteously.

“I come, mighty Augusta, to inform you that the trials of those suspected in the matter of the fire are over, and that nothing positive has been elicited. However, the priest Tigrius and the deacon Serapion are banished from the city, not so much on this account as because of their insane and seditious fanaticism for the late Patriarch.”

“That is well!—I am much pleased with the zeal of Optatus.”

“And you will be still more so, most clement Augusta, when you hear that he has shown the utmost indulgence to all the women who were accused. The deaconesses Olympias and Pentadia were set at liberty with an injunction to submit to the new order of things in the Church: in case of their remaining contumacious they incur confiscation and banishment. For the present they are to have time given them to reflect, and to recover their spirits, which are greatly affected by the death of three of their young neophytes.”

“Three young neophytes? and young girls—how very sad! Tell me how it happened,” said the Empress with eager sympathy.

“One was crushed to death in the fearful crowd and confusion of Holy Saturday, when Chrysostom was arrested: the second was in extremely delicate health; she died in prison: and the third—”

“Yes?—the third?” asked Eudoxia anxiously, for Severian paused.

“There is no victory without a sacrifice—no crown without a cross!” he answered. “This third neophyte—you loved her, great Augusta—but she was already lost to you through her ingratitude.”

“Dead! . . . . Gunilda!” shrieked the Empress, starting up with a face of horror: “dead!—that young vigorous, beautiful life!—it is impossible—impossible!”

“The strong mental excitement of the last few days was too much for her—she was quite delirious with fever at her trial—wandered strangely in her speech—there was pressure on the brain, it seems: it was soon over. She died very calmly at last . . . . without a murmur.”

“O Gunilda! . . . . my own darling Gunilda! only God knows all I have lost in you!” and Eudoxia wept bitterly.

“Consider, Empress, and daughter, that you had lost her before her death! Do not dwell on this lamentable accident, but take a comprehensive view of the whole of these recent events, of which one consequence has been the death of this unhappy Gunilda, and another is that you are undisputed Empress of the East.”

“You are right, venerable Father,” said Eudoxia drying her tears: “I ought not to weep—rather to rejoice; for now that that man is gone, the Church is delivered from a tyrant, and I am indeed an Empress.”

On the 6th of October, in the same year, 404, there was a strange deep silence in the Hebdomon Palace. She was dead—the proud, beautiful Empress Eudoxia, dead at the age of twenty-four, after giving birth to her sixth child. She had just attained the summit of her ambition, and found there, waiting for her, an early grave.

Years afterwards—when the children of Arcadius and Eudoxia had solemnly brought the relics of Chrysostom back to Constantinople—when his name and his memory were already among the Saints, when Olympias had long since sunk gently like some pale and quiet star, below the horizon of this world, to rise again, bright and glorious in a better—there lived in the Egyptian Thebaid an aged grey-haired penitent. His name was Eugenius.

THE END.





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